

In Abu Khashib, a village of about 400 houses, five women and five children died and 30 people were injured, the report said.

Plans under way to amend law encouraging honour crimes

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Justice Minister Jawdat Shoul has said the government is considering urgent plans to amend legislation that allow a reduction in penalty for killers who commit crimes of honour.

Shoul said during a lecture late Wednesday that his ministry and the Cabinet were doing their utmost to finalise a draft law before sending it to Parliament for approval.

"I want to assure everyone here that this issue (honour crimes and related legislation) is a major concern to us," he said.

"And Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor are pushing for such changes so we have to finish them within a very short period," Shoul added.

He was referring to Article 340 of the Jordanian

Penal Code No. 16 of 1960, which provides reduced or waived penalties to persons found guilty of killing female relatives who commit adultery or are found in an adulterous situation.

Most men who commit such crimes benefit from a reduction in penalty. On many occasions, they end up receiving sentences ranging from three months to one year, depending on the circumstances of the case.

Between 25 to 30 women are reportedly killed in the Kingdom each year in the name of family honour.

The Royal Palace has asked the government of Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and the government preceding it to prepare amendments that would eliminate contradictions in the judicial process concerning violence against women.

Shoul, addressing members of the Rotary Club of Amman, said the government was also revising the entire Penal Code to meet changes of the modern world.

"Overhauling the entire legislation is not an easy task," he explained. "But we are exerting utmost efforts to tackle what is needed and to make the necessary changes to meet the requirement of every-day changes," he said.

Shoul said he was aware of the snail-paced process at Jordanian courts.

"We realise that the judicial process is slow and we are working to improve it," he said in response to a question raised by a member of the audience. "The salaries of judges have already been increased and all measures have been taken to guarantee their independence," he noted.

The ministry has hired eight court inspectors in the past six months to check on the judiciary and on court procedures.

"We have provided the best atmosphere for these inspectors, and I have promised them that I will not neglect any report they submit to me or any violation or misconduct they come across," he said.

Shoul said he was trying to handle detention orders issued by prosecutors after working hours on Thursday as detainees end up in jail for two days until offices reopen on Saturday to accept a bail request.

"Many times people who are detained on Thursday are innocent but are forced to spend two days in prison and I hope that I can at least introduce changes that could apply to individuals who commit minor offences," he said.

British officers assess Jordan's family protection facilities

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Two British police officials, on a week-long visit to examine Jordan's family protection facilities, have met officials for talks on how to improve these facilities and deepen bilateral cooperation.

Tony Butler, Chief Constable at the Gloucestershire Constabulary, told journalists at the Family Protection Unit — affiliated with the Public Security Department — that the visit was designed to enhance future cooperation in the area of family protection.

The team is in Jordan at the invitation of His Royal Highness Prince Hassan to examine the Jordanian experience in the field of family protection.

Butler praised Jordan's family protection efforts and said he sensed a great feeling of commitment to improve the situation from all officials he met, including the chief of the PSD, representatives from the ministries of interior, justice and social development, judges and criminal prosecutors.

"I sensed a strong willingness and positive commitment by officials to improve the procedures in dealing with victims of domestic violence and to alleviate their trauma and make them more relaxed," he said.

He said Jordanian leading judges he met "did not seem to oppose the idea of introducing new methods to hear victims of abuse at courts."

In many developed countries, victims are usually allowed to testify in a separate room on a video camera connected to the court room to help them avoid their alleged aggressors.

Detective Inspector Paul Purnell, child protection coordinator at the Gloucestershire Constabulary, said that the Jordanian experience in the field "will become a model for countries in the region."

"We are looking at making the Jordanian model a model for other countries in the region," said Purnell. "We are also aiming to teach trainees to enable them to train their colleagues on how to deal with the issue of domestic violence," said Purnell.

Referring to Britain's family protection experiment, Purnell noted that more accidents were reported by individuals because of an increase in confidence towards police and child protection unit.

Lieutenant Colonel Fadel Hmoud, head of the Family Protection Unit, told the Jordan Times that the PSD had many ideas to improve the family protection facilities and to increase the size of the current building, located in Shmeisani.

The unit, which opened in September 1997, deals monthly with cases of sexual offences on or against women and children under 18 as well as child abuse.

"We are studying the possibility of expanding the current building in order to start receiving victims of domestic violence," Hmoud added.

"We are still new in this field and we do not have a shelter for women. This is why we have not dealt with cases of domestic violence yet," he said.

The unit has so far received 295 cases, a fraction of which formed incidents of violence that occurred within the family.

Of the total cases, 242 were referred to courts, 38 to social development experts and 15 to administrative rulers.

The PSD signed an agreement with the ministry of social development and the Jordan River Design recently to enable social experts working in the unit to give social support to victims and their families.

The centre is staffed by police officials specialised in sociology, psychology and law.

Two months ago, police officials decided to stop wearing unofficial uniforms to ensure a relaxed atmosphere for the victims.

"We decided to wear civil clothes to provide psychological assurance to victims we meet," he said. "We also do not want to draw the neighbour's attention when we go out to the field to investigate."

Hmoud said future plans included setting up "similar units in other governorates, depending on the number of reported cases in each area."

"We are studying and analysing our experience and based on it we will move to other cities and provide the same services," he said.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Amman Municipality for allotting a plot of land for the association complex which he said will be built within one year.

Sbarif said the mayor of Amman has promised to name one of the capital's streets after the late Musa Abdul Salam, a journalist who served as assistant director of the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and as a staff member of many local newspapers. He died earlier this week.

Jordanians pray for King Hussein in vigil lasting till late night hours

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Grieving Jordanians prayed late into the hours Friday for His Majesty King Hussein, who was rushed to a military hospital in critical condition after arriving in Amman from a U.S. hospital early yesterday.

Outside the Al Hussein Medical Centre, thousands of tearful men, women and children huddled under pouring rain to hold a vigil for the King, who has been fighting cancer for seven months.

They watched a stream of Royal family members and government officials enter the complex's heavily-guarded gates, including HRH Prince Abdullah, named Crown Prince by King Hussein before he rushed to the Mayo Clinic on Jan. 25 after suffering from a relapse of cancer.

Prince Abdullah replaced his uncle, HRH Prince Hassan, who was removed by the King after 34 years as heir to the Throne.

Many carried Jordanian flags and large portraits of King Hussein, 63, who has ruled the Kingdom for 47 years. Others carried banners reading "Al Hussein is Jordan and Jordan is Al Hussein" and "our hearts are with you our beloved King."

Muslim clerics across the

nation asked Friday's worshippers to pray for the recovery of the King.

In Amman's main Al Hussein Mosque, the imam appeared preparing the ground for the succession in a sermon carried live on state-run Jordan Television.

"We pray to God for the speedy recovery of the King and for the success of the Crown Prince," he told hundreds of worshippers who defied heavy rainfall and cold weather conditions to attend the prayers.

Jordanians had been in a state of shock and disbelief following the apparent failure of the King's second bone marrow transplant after his sudden return to the Mayo Clinic last week.

The sombre mood contrasted sharply with the upbeat mood that hit Jordan when the King returned to a tumultuous welcome on Jan. 19 after having been declared cured from cancer following six months of chemotherapy at Mayo.

"I cannot believe this news. What would we do without our King and our father?" said Sami Jamil, 30, as he listened to an international radio broadcast, a main source of information for eager citizens, many of whom were disappointed by the performance of the more-conservative local

media over the last two weeks.

Outside the state-of-the-art hospital, some women slapped their faces and wailed while others wept openly during the vigil.

"I came here to pray to God for King Hussein," said ten-year-old Rawan in tears, her cheeks flushed red from rain and cold.

Military police maintained a low-key presence at the medical centre as policemen tried to control traffic.

"We did not sleep all night after hearing the sad news that the King was returning to Amman to continue his treatment here among his people," said Salma Hassan, a mother of three. "We are waiting for a miracle to snap us out of our grief, our sense of loss and depression."

Jordan Television evening news bulletin gave few details of the Monarch's condition, saying only that he remained under intensive medical supervision and giving brief statements from Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and Information Minister Nasser Judeh "that further developments will be announced as they take place."

Most dailies simply repeated Thursday's terse Royal Court communiqué carried by

the official Petra news agency saying the King was returning home at his wish to continue his treatment.

"I cannot imagine a day without him around us," said Safia Ahmad, as she wept. "He is a great leader, a father and a brother who always took care of the country and navigated it through difficult times."

Another shopkeeper said: "When King Hussein returned from the U.S. on Jan. 19, we thought it was the end of our pain and his agony with cancer. But this has not stopped and will not as he has served his country and his people like nobody has," said one shopkeeper.

On that day, around 400,000 Jordanians from all walks of life challenged the driving rain and thronged the streets to welcome the King.

But some Jordanians tried to look hopefully to the future.

"It is a sad day," said Salim, an advertising manager. "But whatever happens, we must overcome our sorrows as life has to go on," he added. "I believe such an attitude will also satisfy our leader, King Hussein, and will maintain country's progress, for which the irreplaceable leader fought for long time."

Iraqi-Jordanian team to meet

AMMAN (J.T.) — A joint Jordanian-Iraqi committee will meet in Baghdad by mid-February to discuss details of a draft trade protocol for 1999 hammered out by a joint technical committee last week.

Minister of Industry and Trade Mohammad Saleh Hourani told the state-run news agency Petra on Friday that technical sub-committees had determined Jordan's needs of Iraqi crude oil and other oil derivatives for 1999.

Official sources said Jordan's \$225 million protocol signed in 1998 will be lowered to \$190

million this year in line with a decline in world oil prices.

At the beginning of January, the two countries renewed an agreement on the delivery of 4.8 million tonnes of Iraqi crude oil to Jordan this year at an average price of \$8.4 per barrel.

The Kingdom exports basic essentials to Iraq under an oil-for-food deal which allows sanctions-hit Iraq to sell limited quantities of oil and use the proceeds for food and medicine under strict U.N. control.

Trade between Jordan and Iraq amounted to \$1 billion in

1998, the Iraqi trade minister said recently.

Plans for a 1,000-km-long oil pipeline between the two countries have been under discussion for several months. It would link the Haditha oil field, 260-km north west of Baghdad, with the Jordanian port of Aqaba, via the Zarqa refinery, 20-km north of Amman.

The pipeline, with a capacity of 150,000 barrels per day, would save Jordan \$55 million a year which it currently spends on transporting crude by road. The cost of building the Haditha-Zarqa section is put at

\$350 million.

Hourani said both countries were keen on boosting bilateral trade exchanges. However, he said nine-year-old U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq were "standing in the way of expanding trade."

Jordan's oil purchases from Iraq are exempted from U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq since its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The U.N. has allowed Iraq since December 1996 to sell limited quantities of oil to buy food and medicine for the Iraqi people.

Bankers, brokers look ahead with confidence

By Amy Henderson

AMMAN — Bankers and stock brokers yesterday sought to reassure Jordanians that the dinar and the stock market will remain sound in spite of His Majesty King Hussein's deteriorating health.

Amr Salih, head of the Arab Banking Corporation told the Jordan Times that in spite of speculations early Thursday morning that King Hussein would be returning to Amman after his health took a turn for the worse, he had seen no rush on the dollar. Business hours ended before an official announcement that the King would return to Jordan.

"What I saw was business as usual," the banker said. "I think the fact that people have been adjusting to this fact for a while has alleviated much of this pressure and people saw over the past seven months that there was a sound monetary policy in place."

Earlier last summer, when King Hussein made an announced departure to the Mayo Clinic in the United States where he underwent six

months of chemotherapy treatment for a non-Hodgkins lymphoma, Jordan witnessed a capital flight of approximately \$400 million in a matter of days.

However, more than \$100 million has returned to the country since then, a fact that officials and private sector economists and bankers attribute to a solid monetary policy and a Central Bank decision not to prevent buying of the U.S. green back.

Another banker said that he believed demand for the dollar was higher than usual, but that he did not expect this trend to develop into panic buying.

"I don't expect the Central Bank to issue any decision to stop foreign currency transfers if demand continues to rise," the banker said.

Jordan's foreign currency reserves stand at \$1.2 billion.

Salih also shrugged off news hailing from Occupied Jerusalem that the Jordanian dinar had plunged more than ten per cent against the Israeli shekel, trading at midday for 5.00 shekels against 5.70 shekels the previous evening.

"Worries are always natural," he said. "Especially from those outside the country. Even if there is a [drop] in the dinar, it will be short-term and it will bounce back as soon as people see that things are steady and that there are mechanisms in place."

Meanwhile, the Amman Financial Market last week saw a decline in trading volume, but registered an overall gain in the share price index. Volume at closing time was estimated at JD10.3 million compared to JD16 million the previous week, but the share price index rallied slightly over last week, closing at 178.2 points. Following King Hussein's sudden departure to the United States ten days ago, the price index dropped from 181.6 points to 175.3.

A broker at the market, who cannot be named according to market regulations, said that traders were speculating ahead of announcements about His Majesty King Hussein's health, but said that "now things have become obvious and I expect that things will stay on hold as people watch

[developments with Crown Prince Abdullah]."

Another broker from the prominent National Securities Corporation said he does not expect trading in the AFM, already at a near all-time low due to political uncertainty and instability in the West Bank and Iraq, to slide further.

"What we saw last week, in my opinion, is purely a technical correction," he said. "At the moment, all possibilities are now discounted, and things cannot get worse."

"People, since this summer, have demonstrated their general faith in the financial mechanisms here, and I think that this is certainly a positive sign that we will not see a worse situation," he added.

Daily transactions averaged JD2.1 million, compared to JD3.2 million in the previous week's trading. The industrial sector registered the lion's share of trading, with JD5.8 million — 56.8 per cent of the total trading. Following was the banking and financial services sector, claiming the highest number of shares traded, valued at JD3.7 million.

Cabinet announces five-day banking week

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Friday announced that a two-day weekend for Jordanian banks will be effective starting March 1.

The new arrangement requires banks to close Fridays and Saturdays.

Banking hours will be altered to compensate for lost "weekend hours." Banking hours will be Sunday-Thursday from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., with a half an hour lunch break. Banks will be open to the public from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. according to an announcement made by CBJ Governor Ziyad Fariz.

No further announcement has been made regarding a similar weekend for public sector entities, although the issue was discussed by the

Council of Ministers last month.

Following the Cabinet session Information Minister Nasser Judeh was quoted as saying that different views on the two-day weekend were reviewed along with the impact of such a weekend on tourism, production and economic activities, but no decision has been taken.

A number of local bankers interviewed by the local press expressed opposing views on the new arrangement.

Mifleh Akef, the executive manager of the Arab Bank, said Jordan's economic situation makes it inconvenient for the country's banks to close two days a week. However, he said, should the weekend be approved, it should fall on Friday and Saturday so that local banks will not be cut off

for more than one day from international financial institutions around the world where the holiday is Saturday and Sunday.

Akef pointed out that if government decides to grant the public administration a two-day weekend on Thursday and Friday, as some people have demanded, banks would be cut off from the public for three days, and the public sector would be cut off from the outside world for four days, which does not augur well for the national economy.

Samir Mahdi, general manager of the Arab Land Bank, agreed, saying local banks should maintain contacts with foreign markets. He said closing banks on Thursdays and Fridays will cut off the country's financial institutions

from banks around the world for four days, he pointed out.

In the view of Nancy Baker, a two-day weekend has social, humanitarian and economic advantages, and would allow families to enjoy a "real" holiday. Baker, secretary general of the Ministry of Administrative Development, said a two-day weekend would encourage families to travel in the Kingdom, stimulating domestic tourism.

Supporters of the two-day weekend say the plan will save the country JD6 million annually through saving on energy consumption, communication and transportation and would help reduce pollution. Opponents argue that it will cost the country one-sixth of its gross domestic product in certain sectors.

What's Going On

CONCERT

- Musical performance by pianist Saleem Abboud Ashkar at the Royal Cultural Centre on Sunday Feb. 7 at 8:00 p.m. (Performance includes pieces by Beethoven, Schubert, Bach, Chopin, and Schubmann).

FILM

- "The House of Spirits" at Books@Café, Jabal Amman on Sunday Feb. 7 at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650458).

EXHIBITIONS

- Paintings by Olivier Dehrie at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Feb. 25.
- "Winter 1998" exhibition at the Arts Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 5529610), until Feb. 14.
- Works by Mohammad Al Saifi at Books@Café, Jabal Amman, until Feb. 13 (Tel. 4650457).
- Works by Victor Vasarely at the exhibition hall of the Ministry of Culture, until Feb. 8.
- The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funoo, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until Feb. 25.

Weizman may free Egyptian as part of democracy

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

Chairman of the Board of Directors
Abdel Salam TarawnehVice Chairman & Director General
Mohammad AmadExecutive Editor
Abdullah HasanatResponsible Editor
Elia Nasrallah

Editorial and Advertising Offices

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman

Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585

Facsimile: 5696183

E-mail: jtimes@gn.com.jo

Web Site: <http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/>

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department.

Carrying the torch

Jordanians spent yesterday and last night glued to their television screens switching from one TV station to another to hear news about their beloved King Hussein. Many braved the cold weather conditions and lined up at the gates of Al Hussein Medical Centre offering prayers for the King and country. Meanwhile news agencies, world television stations, and journalists from over the world descended on Amman to relay news about the King's health. Journalists as far as Latin America were calling their colleagues in Amman for updates on the King's health and insights about the country's future.

Jordanians of course have genuine reasons to be concerned. Only two weeks ago they were out in the streets in the hundreds of thousands to celebrate the King's homecoming after he returned home from six months of treatment for cancer. Only one week after that they saw him board his plane once more and head back to the Mayo Clinic, suffering a relapse of cancer. And then yesterday they saw glimpses of the ambulance that carried him from the Queen Alia Airport to Al Hussein Medical Centre.

Jordanians trust His Majesty's choice of HRH Prince Abdullah as heir to the Throne. They put trust in the King's decision to ensure their security and prosperity as they have on so many occasions in the past. But Jordanians, who grew up with the King and who have known no other leader, are also very saddened that a life's journey is about to end.

Meanwhile the interest that the world media has shown in the King and Jordan is a reflection of the stature the King achieved for himself as an active player on the Middle East scene. Not only is he the longest serving leader in the region, the King, and Jordan, have played a crucial role at all junctures in this region starting from the moment he assumed his powers in 1952. Thus it is no wonder that the most frequently asked question put by foreign journalists has been what will Jordan look like after King Hussein.

The answer they heard from Jordanians of all walks of life is that Jordan will continue to be the stable country it has been and that they will all be working to carry the torch that His Majesty has been carrying for the past 47 years.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ru'i's Khairallah Khairallah said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon sent envoys to the U.S. in order to thwart Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat's efforts there. "Bibi" did not hesitate to instigate religious fundamentalist groups to announce their boycott of the breakfast, which was attended by President Bill Clinton and Arafat, said Khairallah. With clear and effective Jordanian support, including efforts to establish agreements between Israel and the PNA, the Palestinian success is now obvious in the U.S. The importance of Arafat's attendance at the breakfast is that the ceremony included Clinton himself and 3500 American and international personalities. In other words, said the writer, the Palestinian people's representative has become acceptable to the U.S. institutions, which, in the end, dominate the country. Khairallah hoped that some Palestinian groups, which, he said, might serve Israel's Likud, did not exist at this stage.

Al Dustnir's Ali Safadi said the last thing that the government should discuss is the two-day holiday as there are many important issues that concern citizens. If the government considers that the subject comes under administrative reform, it should not be a priority in this regard, added Safadi. Developing and activating administrative legislation and structure and ridding them of corruption in order to achieve efficiency in harmony with the people and the leadership must be the government's top priority, he said. A comprehensive review of the national march requires the government to rush to solve unemployment, poverty, economic depression and other crisis, the writer stated.

U.S. half-baked plan could be disaster

THOUGH SADDAM HUSSEIN does not enjoy much popularity with his own Iraqi people, nor among Arab heads of states in the region adjacent to Iraq, the recent attempts to rally Arab help to topple him is bound to fail. It has become evident that the United States has a serious problem in dealing with the Middle East. It takes the Arabs for granted and where that is not possible, adopts scare tactics. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Well, this time around, it is not working. It will not work because the U.S. is trampling over Arab sensitivities. In addition, the U.S. seeks to create more fait accompli in the Gulf region that will clear the ground for whatever actions, drafted by American strategists in any eventuality, and that includes replacing any Arab regime at will. Hence, Washington's determined campaign to secure the support of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and others in U.S. efforts to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

But Washington has run into resistance from the region. All the countries which Martin Indyk, Washington's pointman in the ongoing effort to oust Saddam, visited in the Gulf on his latest tour, indicated they oppose the use of force and are in no mood to

support the U.S.-led campaign. Such a position is definitely not a reflection of a great admiration or love for the Iraqi leader, who has indeed alienated them by addressing the masses and calling for their overthrow, but stems from the consequences of such a campaign plus an overriding compassion for the people of Iraq. The press rose to speak up against the campaign where government leaders sought to express their position in private. Either way, there can be no mistake in recognizing the message: Yes, the countries of the region can do without Saddam in power in Baghdad, but they do not want the U.S. to do the honours. All changes in Baghdad should be, as King Hussein has often reaffirmed, initiated and carried out by the people of Iraq, not the U.S. military or any American proxy.

The U.S. argument that it would not be directly involved in the effort does not hold water. After all, it is no secret that Washington is sitting on \$97 million (why just that figure, why not \$100 million) dedicated to toppling Saddam. Rather a cheap operation, given that the U.S. collected about \$60 billion to end the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The U.S. has also identified the Iraqi opposition groups which are qualified to

receive chunks of the \$97 million. If financing groups to undertake certain action towards a predetermined outcome is not direct involvement, then what is?

By now, the world knows that none of the so-called Iraqi opposition groups, whether in London or Damascus or Saudi Arabia or Tehran, is capable of bringing about real changes in Iraq. None of them has the credibility or clout needed to carry out the kind of changes that Iraq needs; nor can the groups come and act together with a positive vision for the future of their country. It is a safe conclusion that they will end up diving up the \$97 million "bounty" and the U.S. will turn to the Arabs to produce more money for more efforts to topple Saddam.

Indeed, that is judgement and conjecture at this point, but it is based on the history of similar groups in general in the Arab World, and Iraqis in particular. In any case, that is neither here nor there, but one thing is clear: the U.S. is betting on the wrong horse to bring down Saddam.

But we in Jordan have a special reason to oppose the U.S. plan. We know that any half-baked plan — which is what it is — could seriously backfire, igniting more chaos in Iraq, and directly affect

Jordanian Perspective



Dr. Musa Keilani

its neighbours. And we Jordanians can do without having any additional burdens placed on us as a result of what might develop there between Sunnis and Shiites.

There are several valid points and reasons behind the Gulf region's rejection of the U.S. drive to oust Saddam from power, and to install a "democratic government," as senior American diplomats have put it. First of all, allowing the U.S. a free hand to do whatever it wants in the region will open the door to high-handed American action against any country in the Gulf or elsewhere which does not see eye to eye with Washington in any future

eventuality.

The statement from Oman that Sultan Qaboos told the U.S. team currently touring the region that Muscat is "opposed to any interference in the internal affairs of others, and is working to secure a lifting of the embargo and to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people" sums up the collective stand of the GCC. The U.S. team, headed by Martin Indyk, should also pick its cue from the fact that such a frank and forthright statement was not only made by the Omani leader, but carried by the official media. The net sum of the emerging picture is of a United States concerned more about the security and stability of the Gulf than the countries of the region. Washington is not only trying to tell the countries of the "dangers" they face, it is also attempting to dictate the means with which they should confront it, never mind Arab pride and dignity. Adding insult to injury, it is determined to go ahead with its plans regardless of what the Arabs think and believe in. Then why come to the Arabs in the first place? To ensure that someone ends up paying the bill for American-conceived and American-implemented operations that does not serve Arab interests?

LETTERS

Prayers for His Majesty King Hussein

To the Editor:

WOULD YOU please convey to your readers the heartfelt sadness my wife and I felt tonight when we heard that King Hussein was gravely ill, and was rushed back to his country.

We were so impressed with his recent intervention in the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks in Washington. That was a rare example of personal and moral courage that transcended nationalities. We will pray to our God for your King. Our hearts go out to his wife, his family and his people.

Lawrence Connor
Missouri
U.S.

To the Editor:

I AM BRITISH living in Belgium. My prayers go out to His Majesty King Hussein, HM Queen Noor, the Royal Family and the people of Jordan.

Kenneth J. Heselwood
Belgium

To the Editor:

I JUST wanted to express my personal sorrow for the news of your beloved King Hussein's condition and to offer my prayers on behalf of the Royal Family, the Crown Prince Abdullah and the people of Jordan.

Marshall H. Massengale
Atlanta, Georgia
U.S.

To the Editor:

WE ALL pray for a miracle for your wonderful King truly a great person as well as a great king.

The Windsors
U.S.

To the Editor:

I AM sitting here at 1:30 am Friday, February 5, 1999 praying fervently for His Majesty King Hussein and his family. He is the greatest man I have ever met in my entire life. My heart bleeds for those who have been touched by his life, but especially for Abir, HRH Princess Haya and HRH Prince Ali — the children I was honoured to care for from September 1977 through May of 1980. I send my love

to you and my prayers for your broken hearts this day. I await news of His Majesty's condition, yet I'm left wondering. My memories of my days in Amman are some of the most precious days of my life. His Majesty treated me as one of the family. He taught me so much — tolerance, kindness, respect for all human beings. He taught me how to see the world from his eyes, and how to humble myself to such a world. He honoured me with his trust to care for his sweet children who I think of and miss daily. May God be with you all in this time of great sorrow, and may He hold you close to give you strength to face the coming days.

My Sincerest Love and Sympathy,
Gayle M. Van Alstyne (Basaraba)

To the Editor:

PLEASE ACCEPT the warmest thoughts and prayers of an ordinary American citizen for a speedy recovery for your leader, King Hussein. I hold King Hussein in the highest regard, as I believe many Americans do, and I believe that history will recognise him as one of the truly great men of the 20th century. While we may belong to different cultures and be products of different heritages, I feel that all of us have benefited greatly by the gift of his life and career. I sincerely hope that all men of good conscience will study his life and strive to follow his example for many years to come. While I am sure I cannot feel the depths of your grief at this time, I do share much of your sadness over his grave condition. It is a sign of his greatness, I believe, that we realise how much we will miss him.

William Wilson
U.S.

To the Editor:

IT IS with deep grief that I hear about King Hussein's falling health. He is a very warm and likeable person. My deepest sympathies goes out to his family, and if it may cast a ray of hope, my father survived a similar illness.

Lennart Andresen
Julius Blomsgade 10
2200 Copenhagen N
Denmark

To the Editor:

AS A RESIDENT of Rochester, Minnesota, I wanted to pass along my deepest sympathy to the Hussein family and indeed the country of Jordan. Please know that we too love your King and greatly enjoyed his presence in our homeland. He is, was, and always will be known as a great leader, a great statesman, and a great husband and father. We viewed him as a man who dearly loved peace. My deepest thanks to Jordan for sharing some of their light with me and my family. May God's face shine down upon him.

Jeff Swertfeger
Rochester
U.S.

To the Editor:

I WISH to express my concerns over the health of Your Majesty, King Hussein, and to let you know that we here in the United States of America, are praying for him.

We hope the pain and suffering he has endured will be reduced, and that the people will pause to their creator, and ask for strength in prayers for the King.

Gary Walters
Buffalo, New York
U.S.

To the Editor:

I HEARD on the news that your great and honourable King is coming home to live his last days with the ones he loves. I wanted to have a way of letting him know that I have always thought of him as a great and loving leader amongst a world of "not so greats." I have listened to his saneness and reasonableness since my teenage years and have felt great respect. He should be proud of all he has accomplished and hold his head high when he meets his God. He will be blessed and accepted and will sit alongside the greats of all time; Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa, and others.

Terry Harosky
U.S.

To the Editor:

I OFFER my deepest sympathy and prayers for His Majesty King Hussein. At 44 years of age I have always followed King Hussein with great interest and admiration. My prayers are with his family and the wonderful people of Jordan.

Mark N Kilborn
Mobile, Alabama
U.S.

To the Editor:

I HAVE been reading news flashes on the precarious condition of King Hussein, and I wish to express my deep regret at his present medical condition. I am not a history expert by any means, but any American of adult age must know from the media coverage over the years of the importance on the world political scene of this man. He always seemed to play a very judicious, balancing role in your region, being a person of great intelligence, wisdom, personal character, and strength. The world will rarely find the like of him again.

Daniel Scott Smith
PO Box 457
St. Peters, PA 19470
websmith@bellatlantic.net

Strength in stability

Compiled by
Mohammad Ben Hussein

Columnists last week commented on His Majesty King Hussein's decision to change his successor.

THE STATE RUN Jordan news agency, Petra, quoted the Arab politician Abdul Hadi Abu Taleb in an article published in the London based newspaper, "The Middle East," commenting on King Hussein's decision to replace HRH Prince Hassan and appoint HRH Crown Prince Abdullah as heir to the Throne.

King Hussein created Jordan in its modern form, said Abu Taleb, and after great efforts and much pressure he was able to unify its people, who believe that his presence is the only guarantee of the country's stability and continuity. The King's decision to remove Prince Hassan was prompted by emotional as well as constitutional incentives, which probably, according to Abu Taleb, is the reason observers and sympathisers worry about the Kingdom's future. The worry becomes more justified in view of the fact that the decision was a surprise to everybody. Few people, a few weeks ago, would have expected anyone but Prince Hassan as heir to the Throne. Another reason for the concern lies in the King's letter to Prince Hassan in which he informed his brother of his wish. The letter apparently touched a sensitive issue: the solidarity of the Royal Family, Abu Taleb said. The sudden change coincides with a very critical period in Jordan's history: the King's deteriorating health, he claimed. But, the King deserves the fullest trust after spending his entire life struggling to keep Jordan as highly rated as it is among international society in the 46 years His Majesty has ruled, said Abu Taleb. Those 46 years can be likened to the King's own life: Both the country and the leader grew together. The maturity of Jordan is a mirror reflection of the King's maturity, said the writer. King Hussein built Jordan from nothing; house by house, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, street by street and ministry by ministry. The King and the people have lived together for around half a century. The King was the brother, the son and the father to all Jordanians; he knows their history, their needs and their pain, added the writer. In a monarchy, the throne is

automatically transferred to the King's son and that is what His Majesty did. He behaved in accordance with his constitutional powers, said the political analyst. The writer argued that Jordan is a unified country which will not be threatened by the King's wish and the appointment of his eldest son, said Abu Taleb. If Crown Prince Abdullah follows in his father's steps he will continue to maintain the miracle his father achieved, predicted the writer. The King's decision should be the start of a new era for Jordan, said Abu Taleb.

The writer praised Prince Hassan for obeying the King and receiving his elder brother's order like a soldier, a soldier, however, who should not disappear: his country needs the experience he obtained during 34 years as crown prince.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Abdul Rubim Malhas said Jordanians were worried by the King's decision to replace Prince Hassan by Crown Prince Abdullah because the decision was unexpected. For 34 years Jordanians were assured by the King's repeated statements that Prince Hassan was heir to the Throne, but suddenly, and for reasons still not clear, the King decided to appoint Prince Abdullah as his successor, said the writer. Jordanians are not worried about the succession to the Throne as much as they are worried about the King's health, said the writer and added that they are concerned about rearranging the Jordanian house not the Hashemite family. Jordanians expect outside attempts to destabilise the country, but they believe that ultimately Jordan will win the battle because Jordan's future and stability concerns many influential countries, said Malhas. Jordanians are worried about the problems which may occur from within the Jordanian family not outside it, said the writer. They believe in "stability for continuity," but they are concerned about people who believe in "stability for investment," sacrificing their principles for the sake of money. However, the real worry is people who want to take an advantage from the stability of the country to continue to abuse people and "suck their blood," claimed Malhas. The writer argued that any change is accompanied by worry, but called it a great chance which could be used to defeat people who want to divide the country.

Features
Children

Beirut shop

The S

INTERVIEW WITH A SHE

Children of Iran's revolution want freedom and work

By Kaveh Basmenji
Reuters

THEY TOPPLED Iran's last monarch, they seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran, but 20 years on, the children of the Islamic revolution are demanding reforms from the moderate president they elected.

In a Tehran amusement hall run by a state-affiliated foundation, youths swarm around screens to play the latest U.S. and Japanese computer games. Outside, workers are erecting arches decked with green leaves and colourful lights for 10 days of celebrations marking the February 11, 1979, revolution.

"We read about the shah and the revolution in our school books, but we have other things on our minds. We want to be left alone and to have fun. Is that too much to ask?" asks Mandana, an 18-year-old girl, queuing at a Tehran cinema.

The demands of the young generation, not born when the revolution toppled the pro-Western Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, are cause for major

concern for the custodians of a system heralded by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini under the slogan of "independence, freedom, Islamic republic."

More than half of Iran's 60 million people are under 25, including 24 million at schools and universities.

At a time of economic hardship and political uncertainty, many of the young people raise demands for education, social freedom, jobs, housing and easy marriage.

"The Islamic republic is trying to harness a tremendous energy. The youth cannot remember anything about the shah and do not care about the old days, but they carry the heritage of unfulfilled dreams of previous generations," said Mohammad Qaed, publisher of the educational monthly Lowh.

Disillusioned with the policies of the conservative clerical establishment, the youth played a vital role in the 1997 election victory of Mohammad Khatami, who promised to attend to their needs. And they have so far supported Khatami despite his limited

powers in carrying out his reforms.

The sheer numbers of young people and strict social restrictions imposed on them pose a serious problem for any establishment, said social scientist Abbas Mokhber.

"If a fundamental solution is not found for their needs, the society could be seriously disrupted," Mokhber said.

Khatami has said repeatedly that it is essential to relax restrictions on Iranian youth if they are to be attracted to religion and safeguard the Islamic republic.

"The youth are standing firm on their votes and have not turned their back on Khatami despite economic problems. But to what extent? That remains to be seen," Qaed said.

Iranian youngsters are caught in the crossfire between traditionalism and globalisation, social scientists say.

Official education and state media try to keep them in line with revolutionary values in the face of a Western "cultural invasion" which is transforming their lives.

Students are called on to join the

Basji, a paramilitary organisation under the umbrella of the Revolutionary Guards, which aims to safeguard the revolution against "enemies."

"We will continue the path of our Imam (Khomeini). We will not let the West's cultural onslaught take over and dilute our Islamic principles," said Amir Hossein, a 16-year-old Basji member.

But many young people enjoy easy, albeit illegal, access to pirate videos of Hollywood's latest productions, tapes of pop and rock music and Western satellite television.

Boys and girls who ardently follow and try to emulate heavy metal or rap music groups now stroll together in the capital's shopping malls or parks. Under Khatami, they are less afraid of being arrested for flouting the ban on the contact between unmarried couples or the Islamic dress code for women.

Many of the "modern" youngsters also take active part in traditional religious rituals such as the Ashura processions commemorating the martyred Shi'ite Imam Hussein.

While some traditionalist clerics have derided the youth's demand for freedom as a manifestation of sexual drives provoked by Western cultural influences, other conservatives have blamed the establishment for neglecting the needs of the youngsters.

"Tell the authorities to pay attention to the plight of the 20-year-old youths of the revolution. The youth are treated harshly no matter what they do," a youngster wrote to a paper.

"If they are politically active and support the president, this causes them problems, and if they are indifferent and spend their time having fun, they are estranged in another way. What are they to do then?" Although the demands of young people have political implications in Iran's tense factional battleground, many agree that their motivations are anything but political.

While hundreds of thousands of youths poured into the streets to celebrate the victory of Iran's soccer team over the United States in the World Cup last summer, the most heated pro-Khatami rallies draw just a few thou-

sand people.

The authorities have warned against the danger of drugs among the youth, and the state television continually broadcasts anti-drugs clips, soap operas and panel discussions.

Officials put the number of drug addicts at 1.2 million, but an anti-AIDS campaign group said recently the actual number was closer to 3.6 million, including 260,000 school-children.

Unemployment, particularly among the educated, is a major cause of worry for the young. The official unemployment rate is 11 per cent, but analysts say it is actually much higher.

"Today virtually everyone can enter universities, but there are not enough jobs for graduates," Qaed said.

Analysts say the only solution to the multi-dimensional problem of Iranian youth is a democratic approach.

"Taking them into account and asking for their help, lifting unnecessary restrictions and make them feel like they belong to this country and not treat them as strangers, because the future is theirs," Mokhber said.

Beirut shops flaunt pirated software

By Nayla Razzouk
Agence France Presse

THE WORST thing about the unabated widespread use of pirated computer software in Lebanon is that people do not realise that they are doing something wrong.

Legally speaking, they may not be. Until long-awaited new anti-piracy legislation is enacted, up to 40,000 pirated software disks will continue to be shipped to Lebanon from the Far East and Eastern Europe every month without breaking Lebanese copyright law.

Legal experts here say that the 1924 law is "very vague" making it impossible to take legal action against software pirates in Lebanon, where about 95 per cent of all software is thought to be copied.

Pirate versions of software programmes, whose originals cost anything from \$400 to \$4,000, are shamelessly on display at computer retail outlets on every Beirut street corner at a price of less than \$10.

Computer engineers also buy cheap computer parts from Asian countries enabling them to sell locally-assembled computers equipped with a wide range of unlicensed free software at the bargain-basement price of \$1,000.

"Such a set-up would cost about 4,000 dollars elsewhere. Lebanon is a paradise of pirated software, as nearly every home, company, bank and government institution is using unlicensed products," said a visiting foreign com-

puter expert.

"But what hurts the industry most is that nobody feels guilty. People don't know that they are doing something wrong," said Ziad Mughtrah, owner of one of the leading Lebanese Internet providers, Destination.

"One woman even had the nerve to complain that she wanted a cheaper version of a programme — which should cost 900 dollars — when she was asked for 15!" said a computer software dealer.

Disgruntled members of the information technology community are eagerly waiting for parliament to pass an amendment to the outdated copyright law that would finally give it some teeth.

The new bill is expected to stipulate jail sentences of between one month and three years and fines of between 500,000 Lebanese pounds (\$333) and 5 million Lebanese pounds (\$3,333) for software piracy, an official at the ministry of economy said.

The draft law was approved in November by the joint parliamentary commissions after three years of deliberation and many hope it will finally be ratified by parliament in its February session.

So far the only visible lobbying efforts for software protection have come from the United States, through its embassy, visiting officials and computer companies — mainly Microsoft.

"The embassy continues to lobby senior Lebanese government officials on behalf of U.S. companies who

report piracy and infringement, and has coordinated with the Lebanese government and Washington to allow U.S. experts to provide input on the new legislation," said a U.S. embassy report.

"If Lebanon eventually joins the World Trade Organisation, as it plans, it will have to (adopt) effective legislation and enforcement of intellectual property rights protections," said the report published on the Internet.

But reports about the new law have raised fears that computer use in Lebanon will decline, leading to unemployment, and encouraging the establishment of local pirate factories which would deal a blow to a fast-growing new local software development industry.

Many newspapers and even MPs have also warned that drastic measures against software piracy will provoke a "scientific and cultural catastrophe" which will mainly hit the younger generation in Lebanon where the minimum monthly salary remains \$200.

"We know that clamping down on piracy would be beneficial for Lebanon's reputation and the inflow of foreign investment, but ironically it was piracy which helped develop the computer industry in Lebanon in the first place," said an expert.

The irony of the situation is best summed up by a poster at the entrance of one of the largest stores on busy Hamra street proudly selling more than 100,000 pirated programmes, which warned: "It is not just wrong to use unauthorised software, it's a crime."

Iraq's ex-PoWs struggle to rebuild their lives

By Tanya Willmer
Agence France Presse

KHADUM FADEL says he was reborn the day he crossed the border back into Iraq, painfully thin and trembling after 16 long years in a prison camp in northern Iran.

"I cannot describe the feelings. It's as if I had died and was given another life," said Fadel, whose shock of silver-grey hair makes him look much older than his 42 years.

"It was like a dream. Every year they told us you will return to Iraq, the next year it was the same story. For years we waited for our freedom, to see our families again."

He was among almost 5,600 Iraqi prisoners who returned home in an exchange with Iranian authorities in April — almost 10 years after the ceasefire ended the bloody conflict between the two neighbours.

Fadel, a reservist who went to war as a driver, struggled to remember fragmented details of his ordeal.

"It was a terrible time, miserable... little food, and often very cold. Sometimes we were chained up. The camp was surrounded by barbed wire and mines."

His return was traumatic and confused. He was underfed, suffering from rheumatism and a stomach inflammation, and Baghdad had changed so much since 1982 that at first he didn't recognise his own neighbourhood.

But five months ago, Fadel married Suad, who had waited 16 years for her fiancé's return.

A mechanic by trade, he has also since returned to the ramshackle Baghdad car repair yard where he used to work.

Nowadays he does little more than tinker, as he tries to survive on the

130,000 dinars (\$70) the government paid him as his army salary for 16 years.

More than 90,000 Iraqi and Iranian PoWs have been repatriated since the end of the 1980-1988 war, but the issue remains a key stumbling block between the two, with both sides arguing over the number of its nationals still captive.

Baghdad says 20,000 Iraqi PoWs are in Iranian jails, while Iran claims at least 5,000 of its soldiers are still in Iraq.

"It's the forgotten conflict," rued Daniel Duvalard, deputy head of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which supervises the repatriation process and occasionally acts as mediator.

"It's a very long process, but even if it's a few hundred at a time it's a positive step," he said, adding that for many returnees another ordeal was only just beginning: to rebuild their lives in their sanctions-hit country.

Iraq has a grandiose memorial to the war which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives on both sides: an esplanade straddled at each end by soaring arches made of swords gripped by the hands of Saddam Hussein, and iron nets containing thousands of shattered and bullet-scattered Iranian helmets.

Iraqi helmets are also implanted into the road, so everyone must walk over them or drive over them, said a soldier on duty at the site.

Khalad Al Saadi, chairman of Iraq's parliamentary human rights committee, said repatriation of war veterans and their welfare was a key concern of the government.

He said returning servicemen received "gifts" from the president, along with their accumulated salaries. But he declined to say how

much aid was handed out.

The last handover of Iraqi PoWs was on December 16, with around 200 Iraqis returning just as U.S. and British forces launched their four-day Desert Fox air war on the country.

Satar Jaber, who served as a regular soldier, also has the date of his release etched on his memory. "I was born anew on August 24, 1990. That was the date of my return to Iraq and now it's my birthday."

The 40-year-old, bell captain at Baghdad's Sagman Hotel, was released in the first major prisoner exchange since the war, after being held captive for eight years in a tent camp in a mountainous region of northeast Iran.

"We ate only a little, some rice, no meat, and a small piece of bread, that was all for a day. We had no shoes and in the winter it was freezing. The snow was more than a metre (three feet) deep, enough to cover half a man, and we tried to make paths digging out the snow with our plates," he said.

"When they punished me, I pretended it was a gift, a medal, that's how I got through it. And even after all that time, I always knew we would return, but we had no news of the outside, no radio and we didn't even know when the war was over."

But Jaber said life under sanctions was little better. "The Iraqis put a sort of blockade on us, gave the 40,000 Iraqi prisoners a little to eat, some clothes, some medicine," he said.

"Now I see the same blockade but from the direction of the United States and Britain, and this time it's not just against me, but all the people are suffering here, especially children."

The Saturday Crossword

INTERVIEW WITH A SHEPHERD
By Frances Hansen, Metuchen, New Jersey

- ACROSS**
1. In a Ceres suburb
 2. Beer barrels
 3. Queen's address
 4. Eucalyptus
 5. Singers' position
 6. Euphemistic oath
 7. Side on Lake Erie
 8. "A Passage to..."
 9. For one bird?
 10. "Star Wars" princess
 11. Hand Sp
 12. Gravel substance
 13. Do more sheep because well?
 14. Disputes
 15. Term of DIX
 16. Political coalition
 17. Gurning up
 18. Act out
 19. Top off a root
 20. Explosive sound
 21. Juggler
 22. Japanese poem
 23. Top drawer
 24. Where Anna met to King
 25. Casuarina
 26. "Who do you think you are?"
 27. Pseudo "Piers"
 28. Conch up
 29. Violent conflicts
 30. Video game company
 31. Sweet
 32. Transportation company
 33. Steak bones
 34. "Hitting air"
 35. "You're cold"
 36. Why aren't sheep intelligent?
 37. Causal
 38. Make dry
 39. "Unusually pale"
 40. Musical dir
 41. Kinky novel, with "The"
 42. Smallest amount
 43. "I am of Bona"
 44. "I'm going to dip"
 45. "I'm in a car"
 46. "I'm not a star"
 47. "I'm not a star"
 48. "I'm not a star"
 49. "I'm not a star"
 50. "I'm not a star"
 51. "I'm not a star"
 52. "I'm not a star"
 53. "I'm not a star"
 54. "I'm not a star"
 55. "I'm not a star"
 56. "I'm not a star"
 57. "I'm not a star"
 58. "I'm not a star"
 59. "I'm not a star"
 60. "I'm not a star"
 61. "I'm not a star"
 62. "I'm not a star"
 63. "I'm not a star"
 64. "I'm not a star"
 65. "I'm not a star"
 66. "I'm not a star"
 67. "I'm not a star"
 68. "I'm not a star"
 69. "I'm not a star"
 70. "I'm not a star"
 71. "I'm not a star"
 72. "I'm not a star"
 73. "I'm not a star"
 74. "I'm not a star"
 75. "I'm not a star"
 76. "I'm not a star"
 77. "I'm not a star"
 78. "I'm not a star"
 79. "I'm not a star"
 80. "I'm not a star"
 81. "I'm not a star"
 82. "I'm not a star"
 83. "I'm not a star"
 84. "I'm not a star"
 85. "I'm not a star"
 86. "I'm not a star"
 87. "I'm not a star"
 88. "I'm not a star"
 89. "I'm not a star"
 90. "I'm not a star"
 91. "I'm not a star"
 92. "I'm not a star"
 93. "I'm not a star"
 94. "I'm not a star"
 95. "I'm not a star"
 96. "I'm not a star"
 97. "I'm not a star"
 98. "I'm not a star"
 99. "I'm not a star"
 100. "I'm not a star"
 101. "I'm not a star"
 102. "I'm not a star"
 103. "I'm not a star"
 104. "I'm not a star"
 105. "I'm not a star"
 106. "I'm not a star"
 107. "I'm not a star"
 108. "I'm not a star"
 109. "I'm not a star"
 110. "I'm not a star"
 111. "I'm not a star"
 112. "I'm not a star"
 113. "I'm not a star"
 114. "I'm not a star"
 115. "I'm not a star"
 116. "I'm not a star"
 117. "I'm not a star"
 118. "I'm not a star"
 119. "I'm not a star"
 120. "I'm not a star"
 121. "I'm not a star"
 122. "I'm not a star"
 123. "I'm not a star"
 124. "I'm not a star"
 125. "I'm not a star"
 126. "I'm not a star"
 127. "I'm not a star"
 128. "I'm not a star"
 129. "I'm not a star"
 130. "I'm not a star"
 131. "I'm not a star"
 132. "I'm not a star"
 133. "I'm not a star"
 134. "I'm not a star"
 135. "I'm not a star"
 136. "I'm not a star"
 137. "I'm not a star"
 138. "I'm not a star"
 139. "I'm not a star"
 140. "I'm not a star"
 141. "I'm not a star"
 142. "I'm not a star"
 143. "I'm not a star"
 144. "I'm not a star"
 145. "I'm not a star"
 146. "I'm not a star"
 147. "I'm not a star"
 148. "I'm not a star"
 149. "I'm not a star"
 150. "I'm not a star"
 151. "I'm not a star"
 152. "I'm not a star"
 153. "I'm not a star"
 154. "I'm not a star"
 155. "I'm not a star"
 156. "I'm not a star"
 157. "I'm not a star"
 158. "I'm not a star"
 159. "I'm not a star"
 160. "I'm not a star"
 161. "I'm not a star"
 162. "I'm not a star"
 163. "I'm not a star"
 164. "I'm not a star"
 165. "I'm not a star"
 166. "I'm not a star"
 167. "I'm not a star"
 168. "I'm not a star"
 169. "I'm not a star"
 170. "I'm not a star"
 171. "I'm not a star"
 172. "I'm not a star"
 173. "I'm not a star"
 174. "I'm not a star"
 175. "I'm not a star"
 176. "I'm not a star"
 177. "I'm not a star"
 178. "I'm not a star"
 179. "I'm not a star"
 180. "I'm not a star"
 181. "I'm not a star"
 182. "I'm not a star"
 183. "I'm not a star"
 184. "I'm not a star"
 185. "I'm not a star"
 186. "I'm not a star"
 187. "I'm not a star"
 188. "I'm not a star"
 189. "I'm not a star"
 190. "I'm not a star"
 191. "I'm not a star"
 192. "I'm not a star"
 193. "I'm not a star"
 194. "I'm not a star"
 195. "I'm not a star"
 196. "I'm not a star"
 197. "I'm not a star"
 198. "I'm not a star"
 199. "I'm not a star"
 200. "I'm not a star"
 201. "I'm not a star"
 202. "I'm not a star"
 203. "I'm not a star"
 204. "I'm not a star"
 205. "I'm not a star"
 206. "I'm not a star"
 207. "I'm not a star"
 208. "I'm not a star"
 209. "I'm not a star"
 210. "I'm not a star"
 211. "I'm not a star"
 212. "I'm not a star"
 213. "I'm not a star"
 214. "I'm not a star"
 215. "I'm not a star"
 216. "I'm not a star"
 217. "I'm not a star"
 218. "I'm not a star"
 219. "I'm not a star"
 220. "I'm not a star"
 221. "I'm not a star"
 222. "I'm not a star"
 223. "I'm not a star"
 224. "I'm not a star"
 225. "I'm not a star"
 226. "I'm not a star"
 227. "I'm not a star"
 228. "I'm not a star"
 229. "I'm not a star"
 230. "I'm not a star"
 231. "I'm not a star"
 232. "I'm not a star"
 233. "I'm not a star"
 234. "I'm not a star"
 235. "I'm not a star"
 236. "I'm not a star"
 237. "I'm not a star"
 238. "I'm not a star"
 239. "I'm not a star"
 240. "I'm not a star"
 241. "I'm not a star"
 242. "I'm not a star"
 243. "I'm not a star"
 244. "I'm not a star"
 245. "I'm not a star"
 246. "I'm not a star"
 247. "I'm not a star"
 248. "I'm not a star"
 249. "I'm not a star"
 250. "I'm not a star"
 251. "I'm not a star"
 252. "I'm not a star"
 253. "I'm not a star"
 254. "I'm not a star"
 255. "I'm not a star"
 256. "I'm not a star"
 257. "I'm not a star"
 258. "I'm not a star"
 259. "I'm not a star"
 260. "I'm not a star"
 261. "I'm not a star"
 262. "I'm not a star"
 263. "I'm not a star"
 264. "I'm not a star"
 265. "I'm not a star"
 266. "I'm not a star"
 267. "I'm not a star"
 268. "I'm not a star"
 269. "I'm not a star"
 270. "I'm not a star"
 271. "I'm not a star"
 272. "I'm not a star"
 273. "I'm not a star"
 274. "I'm not a star"
 275. "I'm not a star"
 276. "I'm not a star"
 277. "I'm not a star"
 278. "I'm not a star"
 279. "I'm not a star"
 280. "I'm not a star"
 281. "I'm not a star"
 282. "I'm not a star"
 283. "I'm not a star"
 284. "I'm not a star"
 285. "I'm not a star"
 286. "I'm not a star"
 287. "I'm not a star"
 288. "I'm not a star"
 289. "I'm not a star"
 290. "I'm not a star"
 291. "I'm not a star"
 292. "I'm not a star"
 293. "I'm not a star"
 294. "I'm not a star"
 295. "I'm not a star"
 296. "I'm not a star"
 297. "I'm not a star"
 298. "I'm not a star"
 299. "I'm not a star"
 300. "I'm not a star"
 301. "I'm not a star"
 302. "I'm not a star"
 303. "I'm not a star"
 304. "I'm not a star"
 305. "I'm not a star"
 306. "I'm not a star"
 307. "I'm not a star"
 308. "I'm not a star"
 309. "I'm not a star"
 310. "I'm not a star"
 311. "I'm not a star"
 312. "I'm not a star"
 313. "I'm not a star"
 314. "I'm not a star"
 315. "I'm not a star"
 316. "I'm not a star"
 317. "I'm not a star"
 318. "I'm not a star"
 319. "I'm not a star"
 320. "I'm not a star"
 321. "I'm not a star"
 322. "I'm not a star"
 323. "I'm not a star"
 324. "I'm not a star"
 325. "I'm not a star"
 326. "I'm not a star"
 327. "I'm not a star"
 328. "I'm not a star"
 329. "I'm not a star"
 330. "I'm not a star"
 331. "I'm not a star"
 332. "I'm not a star"
 333. "I'm not a star"
 334. "I'm not a star"
 335. "I'm not a star"
 336. "I'm not a star"
 337. "I'm not a star"
 338. "I'm not a star"
 339. "I'm not a star"
 340. "I'm not a star"
 341. "I'm not a star"
 342. "I'm not a star"
 343. "I'm not a star"
 344. "I'm not a star"
 345. "I'm not a star"
 346. "I'm not a star"
 347. "I'm not a star"
 348. "I'm not a star"
 349. "I'm not a star"
 350. "I'm not a star"
 351. "I'm not a star"
 352. "I'm not a star"
 353. "I'm not a star"
 354. "I'm not a star"
 355. "I'm not a star"
 356. "I'm not a star"
 357. "I'm not a star"
 358. "I'm not a star"
 359. "I'm not a star"
 360. "I'm not a star"
 361. "I'm not a star"
 362. "I'm not a star"
 363. "I'm not a star"
 364. "I'm not a star"
 365. "I'm not a star"
 366. "I'm not a star"
 367. "I'm not a star"
 368. "I'm not a star"
 369. "I'm not a star"
 370. "I'm not a star"
 371. "I'm not a star"
 372. "I'm not a star"
 373. "I'm not a star"
 374. "I'm not a star"
 375. "I'm not a star"
 376. "I'm not a star"
 377. "I'm not a star"
 378. "I'm not a star"
 379. "I'm not a star"
 380. "I'm not a star"
 381. "I'm not a star"
 382. "I'm not a star"
 383. "I'm not a star"
 384. "I'm not a star"
 385. "I'm not a star"
 386. "I'm not a star"
 387. "I'm not a star"
 388. "I'm not a star"
 389. "I'm not a star"
 390. "I'm not a star"
 391. "I'm not a star"
 392. "I'm not a star"
 393. "I'm not a star"
 394. "I'm not a star"
 395. "I'm not a star"
 396. "I'm not a star"
 397. "I'm not a star"
 398. "I'm not a star"
 399. "I'm not a star"
 400. "I'm not a star"
 401. "I'm not a star"
 402. "I'm not a star"
 403. "I'm not a star"
 404. "I'm not a star"
 405. "I'm not a star"
 406. "I'm not a star"
 407. "I'm not a star"
 408. "I'm not a star"
 409. "I'm not a star"
 410. "I'm not a star"
 411. "I'm not a star"
 412. "I'm not a star"
 413. "I'm not a star"
 414. "I'm not a star"
 415. "I'm not a star"
 416. "I'm not a star"
 417. "I'm not a star"
 418. "I'm not a star"
 419. "I'm not a star"
 420. "I'm not a star"
 421. "I'm not a star"
 422. "I'm not a star"
 423. "I'm not a star"
 424. "I'm not a star"
 425. "I'm not a star"
 426. "I'm not a star"
 427. "I'm not a star"
 428. "I'm not a star"
 429. "I'm not a star"
 430. "I'm not a star"
 431. "I'm not a star"
 432. "I'm not a star"
 433. "I'm not a star"
 434. "I'm not a star"
 435. "I'm not a star"
 436. "I'm not a star"
 437. "I'm not a star"
 438. "I'm not a star"
 439. "I'm not a star"
 440. "I'm not a star"
 441. "I'm not a star"
 442. "I'm not a star"
 443. "I'm not a star"
 444. "I'm not a star"
 445. "I'm not a star"
 446. "I'm not a star"
 447. "I'm not a star"
 448. "I'm not a star"
 449. "I'm not a star"
 450. "I'm not a star"
 451. "I'm not a star"
 452. "I'm not a star"
 453. "I'm not a star"
 454. "I'm not a star"
 455. "I'm not a star"
 456. "I'm not a star"
 457. "I'm not a star"
 458. "I'm not a star"
 459. "I'm not a star"
 460. "I'm not a star"
 461. "I'm not a star"
 462. "I'm not a star"
 463. "I'm not a star"
 464. "I'm not a star"
 465. "I'm not a star"
 466. "I'm not a star"
 467. "I'm not a star"
 468. "I'm not a star"
 469. "I'm not a star"
 470. "I'm not a star"
 471. "I'm not a star"
 472. "I'm not a star"
 473. "I'm not a star"
 474. "I'm not a star"
 475. "I'm not a star"
 476. "I'm not a star"
 477. "I'm not a star"
 478. "I'm not a star"
 479. "I'm not a star"
 480. "I'm not a star"
 481. "I'm not a star"
 482. "I'm not a star"
 483. "I'm not a star"
 484. "I'm not a star"
 485. "I'm not a star"
 486. "I'm not a star"
 487. "I'm not a star"
 488. "I'm not a star"
 489. "I'm not a star"
 490. "I'm not a star"
 491. "I'm not a star"
 492. "I'm not a star"
 493. "I'm not a star"
 494. "I'm not a star"
 495. "I'm not a star"
 496. "I'm not a star"
 497. "I'm not a star"
 498. "I'm not a star"
 499. "I'm not a star"
 500. "I'm not a star"
 501. "I'm not a star"
 502. "I'm not a star"
 503. "I'm not a star"
 504. "I'm not a star"
 505. "I'm not a star"
 506. "I'm not a star"
 507. "I'm not a star"
 508. "I'm not a star"
 509. "I'm not a star"
 510. "I'm not a star"
 511. "I'm not a star"
 512. "I'm not a star"
 513. "I'm not a star"
 514. "I'm not a star"
 - 515

Asia scratching for answers to financial crisis

Daily
A review of news

Agei says present I will not be able to

ANIAN PAR
structure
foreign
to
of
banking
down.
but
about
on train
and Mi
over a
inter-

requested
German re
training
ation (M
banking se
the "obbi
provid
be lin
of as qu
financial in
particip
products
periods
of c
and which
of the local
expressing th
unhindered
policy, even
United States
have
sought to ex
opposing
rather a
strategic
from f
and that such a

FORECAST
By Linda C. [unclear]

APRIL (April 19) You
think of the
night now is
to have a
decide you don't
of buying it
and your money

MAY (May 20) May
carry the
person will get
may be an
warned about
whether is well
with about you
person with more

JUNE (June 21) There
disappointment
to live in a dead
is involved, y
Henny of pe
do, but nobody
well as you do
final decision you
and you're be


JULY (July 22) The
can be appar
and you'll be able
missfully. As long
you know the n
have to wait until
later line than never

AUGUST (August 23) Travel
today. That
But you should
realize how
the Oils are you'll be
thought. Again, y
is in the p
with somebody you

SEPTEMBER (September 24) September
you take
they appear to
the whole story
very good at
then more than
lunches are
through or
to October

OCTOBER (October 25) Octo
of a family today.

JORDAN


Many villas and
apartments for
rent and sale
Furnished & Unfurnished
For more information call:
Abdoun Real Estate
5820000

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Aqel says present banking structure in Jordan will not be able to face foreign competition

** "THE (JORDANIAN) banking sector in its present structure will not be able to face foreign competition should it open to the outside world because of the small size of the banking units operating in the Kingdom, their limited financial and human resources and their inability to spend large amounts on training and technology," said Mufleh Aqel, the regional manager at the Arab Bank headquarters in Amman.

In a paper he submitted to a workshop held in Amman recently about the effect of joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the Jordanian banking sector, Aqel indicated that the "obligations which we can provide in this regard should be limited especially in the area of acquiring and managing financial institutions and the area of participating in other financial products."

"During transition periods, we should allow the entry of expertise that we lack and which can help in developing the local market," Aqel said, stressing that we should not be embarrassed from exceptions as many countries, including the United States and many European states, have taken that step. He was quick to explain that he was not opposing the openness drive but rather advocating a comprehensive strategy to optimise the gains from financial openness.

Aqel proposed that such a strat-

egy could begin through adopting a formula to develop financial ties on the Arab level. "We can exchange the advantages without being obliged to provide them to countries outside the Arab fold," the senior banker said adding that that should be besides rearranging the internal Jordanian banking environment. In this regard, he mentioned forming bigger units, utilising more advanced technologies and more qualified management.

The Arab Bank's regional manager emphasised that the global drive towards liberalisation and economic integration is a comprehensive move that must be followed but with the least damage. However, he said, the coming openness will have many negative effects that will affect the economies of the developing nations which cannot compete with large and more capable economies of developed states.

Aqel saw the possibility of foreign institutions collecting local savings and investing them in their home countries where more attractive opportunities and less risks exist. Furthermore, the negative effects can be in the form of opening legal channels to suck local savings in favour of foreign investments and through influencing on the efficiency of the monetary policies followed as a result of the liberal climate that will be offered to financial institutions (Al Ra'i).

Partners sabotage shopping sprees, says survey

LONDON (AFP) — Bored husbands and fussy women are costing stores up to 25 per cent extra sales by sabotaging their partners' shopping expeditions, according to research out Friday.

Men employ favourite tricks to escape shopping altogether, and both sexes annoy each other constantly when they do make it out to the shops.

The survey by a retail group found that men complain about traffic or lack of parking to avoid going out, and sulk about missing sport on television or appear bored when they do eventually go.

Men also infuriate their partners — described as the driving force behind most shopping trips — by urging them to grab the first thing and rush to the till.

Women are liable to study every shape, size and colour before making their choice, and accuse men of wanting to buy the cheapest thing on offer.

But women annoy their

partners too, by asking questions such as:

"Does my bum (U.S. butt) look too big in this?" and then complaining about the answer, the survey found.

They often reach the head of the queue and then disappear, deciding they need something else.

Feminine wiles for cur-tailing a tour of men's shops were much more subtle, the research found.

Men said their partners would complain of tiredness, aching feet and "not being well," or pretend they were worried about the children or where the car was parked.

Both sexes agreed that they would spend as much as 25 per cent more in the shops than they intended if their partners offered more supportive advice.

The survey urged retailers to do more to lure reluctant shoppers, such as offering adult "creches" — "imaginative places where the disaffected partner can be parked happily while shopping goes on."

Mergers seen necessary for Lebanon bank growth

BEIRUT (R) — Merger fever is set to sweep Lebanon's financial sector as a sluggish economy and falling interest rates force banks to consider consolidation, bankers have said.

They said last month's takeover deal between two leading banks would give acquisitions an added edge in an industry criticised for having too many small banks and not enough institutions that can handle regional business.

"It's not much being the number one bank in Lebanon any more," said Bassam Yammine, senior manager of the corporate finance division at Lebanon Invest, referring to the merger between Byblos Bank and Banque Libanaise pour le Commerce (BLC).

"With the slowdown in the economy in Lebanon and in the world, banks need to go regional to survive and to do that, they must merge. They will also have to become much more efficient or much bigger to face up to the pressure that the treasury bill yields will have on their income," he told Reuters.

Financial analysts and the Bank of Lebanon have been advocating mergers in Lebanon's banking sector for years. There are 68 banks in Lebanon, which was the financial hub of the Middle East before the outbreak of civil war in 1975.

Bankers estimate treasury bills provide more than 70 per cent of their revenues, but yields have gradually declined as the central bank reduces interest on Lebanese pound paper. Yields, which peaked at about 30 per cent two years ago, now range between 11.73 and 16.02 per cent.

Alternative sources of income are scarce in a country with an economic growth rate of 3.8 per cent and a population less than four million. Competition is fierce and likely to intensify after the BLC-Byblos deal, bankers said.

"This year we're going to see more mergers and acquisitions because no one wants to be left behind," said Salam Saade, senior associate at Middle East Capital Group.

"There's going to be war between the top banks. The battle has

already begun and the (BLC-Byblos) merger reinforces it," he added. Byblos last month bought 53 per cent of BLC for \$109 million, creating the country's biggest bank in terms of capital.

The new institution, which will retain the Byblos name, has the largest number of branches in Lebanon. It also has four offices in the United Arab Emirates and representation in Paris, London and Brussels.

BLC's chief financial officer Jean Felix Ahoujaoude described the merged entity as "the only real Lebanese institution with a regional potential."

Financiers said it was the catalyst that would speed up much-needed consolidation. "Lebanese banks are finding themselves in a position where bigger is better," said a senior financial analyst. "Small banks have to search for an ideal partner to grow and big banks are finding their growth not increasing at the same pace. Their ability to survive depends on mergers."

ASEAN travel slump costs estimated 2m jobs, \$7.5b

SINGAPORE (AFP) — South East Asian tourism ministers and travel executives met here Thursday to work out strategies against a slump which cost their economies an estimated two million jobs and \$7.5 billion in 1998.

Singapore Trade and Industry Minister Lee Yock Suan, citing figures from the World Travel and Tourism Council, told the ASEAN Tourism Conference the next two years would remain tough globally and regionally.

"In the face of intense competition from other regions for the tourism dollar, ASEAN countries must get their acts together, both individually and collectively, to attract a larger share of the global tourism revenue," he said.

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) groups Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Cambodia is awaiting formal admission.

Intra-regional tourism among ASEAN members slumped following sharp currency falls since mid-1997. Problems such as haze from regional forest fires and violence in Indonesia have also scared off tourists.

Lee cited estimates that the total gross domestic product (GDP) generated from tourism last year in the region dropped by \$7.5 billion or 11 per cent from the original

estimate of \$77 billion. Globally, tourism-generated GDP fell by an estimated three per cent or \$120 billion to \$3.5 trillion.

"Estimated employment in the regional tourism industry has fallen by about two million jobs to 20 million jobs," he said.

Lee said that with the devaluation of ASEAN currencies and with increased competition, the region had become more cost-competitive and attractive to tourists from outside and within ASEAN.

"The currency factor is, however, eroded by the practice of some countries and establishments to charge in U.S. dollars," he warned.

He said that if ASEAN members combined their attractions into packages, they could better entice long-haul tourists in the same way Asian travellers squeeze in as many stops as possible in Europe and the United States.

"ASEAN needs to work in partnership to turn our tourism industries around. Travellers tend to view the ASEAN region as a whole," he said, calling for "new ideas and products" to "combat the negative fallout from the regional crisis."

Kenny Goh, president of the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA), which groups government agencies and travel-related industries, said one of the main constraints of attracting

tourists to the region was the prospect of political unrest, which he called a "complex problem."

"At the end of the day, issues are beyond us, especially politics," he told AFP, adding that ASEAN should perform better in terms of tourism earnings in 1999 because of the lower comparative base in 1998.

"It should be better in general. Thailand is already doing well," he said.

Ray Spurr, senior policy adviser to the London-based World Travel and Tourism Council, warned ASEAN members against taking short-term measures detrimental to the industry.

"When they devise short-term economic policies especially in a situation that is very difficult, with the economic problems in South East Asia, they need to keep very clearly in mind the impact in the long-term to the travel and tourism industry," he said.

He cited as examples the imposition of airport taxes and the danger that trade liberalisation could be put on a back burner. "We believe that travel and tourism is a major beneficiary of open markets. It is very important to keep up the pace of liberalisation especially in the telecommunications sector, which is a key link to the travel and tourism industry," he said in an interview.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You like to have things the minute you think of them, but part of your lesson right now is self-discipline. It's not terrible to have to wait for what you want. You might decide you don't really want it after all. Instead of having the first thing you see, hold onto your money and keep shopping.

TALIBUS: (April 20 to May 20) You may decide to let your partner carry the ball today. Looks like the other person will get farther than you will. You may be in unfamiliar territory and a little worried about the next move. Well, your caution is the next move. There are some peculiarities about your situation. Better let a partner with more experience take the lead.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There's some sort of breakdown or disappointment today and you're the one who has to deal with it. Even if somebody else is involved, you have to make the decision. Plenty of people are telling you what to do, but nobody knows your situation as well as you do. Listen to them, but make the final decision yourself.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) The confusion is starting to abate and you're becoming more focused. It'll soon be apparent what needs to be done, and you'll be able to make the decision effortlessly. As long as there's still effort involved, you know the time isn't quite right. If you have to wait until tomorrow, so be it. Better late than never, in this instance.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) Travel doesn't look like a great idea today. That might be frustrating initially, but you should warm up to the fact once you realise how much you can accomplish. Odds are you'll be feeling bold and brassy tonight. Again, your best place to get exuberant is in the privacy of your own home, with somebody you love — who can keep a secret.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) Study the situation today before you take action. Things are not as they appear to be. Dig around a little to get the whole story. You love sleuthing. You're very good at solving puzzles, too, today even more than usual. Just know that now your hunches are probably right on target, so follow through on them.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) You're in for a bit of a hassle today. Don't get

pushed into a decision that's not right for you. Your wisest choice is to figure out what's going to work best for you and the ones you love, and do that no matter what other people want you to do. That's important, especially if your money is involved.

SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) You might as well sleep in this morning. Later, you'll get kind of antsy. Your energy level will go up and it'll be hard for you to sit still. There are lots of chores and projects that you have in mind, and you'll be a dynamo, racing around, getting everything done. Have a great time while you're at it!

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The earlier you get started on a trip this weekend, the better your chances of avoiding delays. The longer you hang around the house, the more reasons you'll come up with to stay there. Could be friends dropping in from far away. If you think that's likely to happen, check it out. Don't assume anything today.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) You could attend a social gathering today that would be good for your career. If you're going to be doing business with someone, it always helps to build a relationship first in a casual setting. If you want to create a relationship where there isn't one, ask for coaching. Today, learning could be an avenue to success for you.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) Continue to stretch yourself — mind, body, attitude — to take in more and more. You're in an expansive phase, so don't hold back. Get uninhibited, at least as much as possible within self-defined parameters. Maybe you could stretch those parameters, too. Do a little work on that this evening, with the help of a good friend.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) This would be a great weekend for you to run a marathon. You're full of energy, and you want to stretch your barriers, stretch your boundaries, stretch your mind, stretch your legs, stretch everything. You'll be way in from of the pack before you even know what happened. Watch where you're going, however. There are hurdles to jump over.

Birthstone of February:
Amethyst — Onyx

COMPANY	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE
BANKS			
ARAB BK	213.000	215.000	+0.94%
NTL BK	1.510	1.510	0.00%
BK OF JO	1.190	1.290	+8.40%
MIDDLE EAST BK	1.020	0.970	-4.90%
INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK	1.510	1.480	-3.31%
THE HOUSING BK	2.700	2.750	+1.85%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.860	1.940	+4.30%
JO. GULF BK	0.700	0.680	-2.86%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.680	1.680	-1.19%
UNION BK	1.050	1.000	-4.76%
JO. INVEST. & FIN. BK	1.340	1.290	-3.73%
BEIT ELMAL	0.690	0.700	+1.45%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.520	0.520	0.00%
BANKS INDEX	280.810	point =	+0.91%
INDUSTRY			
CEMENT	3.800	3.580	-0.56%
PHOSPHATE	2.050	2.350	+14.63%
ARAB POTASH	3.780	3.970	+2.38%
PETROLEUM REFINER	10.580	10.880	+0.85%
JO. TANNING	5.300	5.150	-2.83%
THE IND. COM. & AGRI	1.050	1.080	+2.86%
ARAB PHARMACEUT	2.860	3.150	+8.42%
CERAMIC IND.	1.170	1.340	+14.53%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.200	1.330	+10.83%
JO. PIPES	1.080	1.130	+4.63%
NTL STEEL	0.500	0.500	0.00%
IRAR AL DAWA	5.230	5.450	+4.21%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLE	0.550	0.540	-1.82%
JO. STEEL	0.820	0.820	0.00%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1.800	1.850	+2.78%
CHLORINE	1.250	1.240	-0.80%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.380	0.400	+5.26%
NTL IND.	0.350	0.350	0.00%
PETROL - CHEMICAL	0.320	0.300	-6.25%
INDUSTRY INDEX	92.880	point =	+3.05%
PARALLEL			
EXPORT BK ITS	0.800	0.910	+11.11%
JO. TRADING FACILITE	0.400	0.380	-5.00%
CENTRAL STORG	0.350	0.350	0.00%
UNION INVEST CORP	0.830	0.870	+4.82%
AL. EXCAL	0.800	0.850	+6.25%
ADVANCED PHAR	0.530	0.520	-1.89%
AL. SHARO	1.000	1.000	0.00%
MEDICAL APPLIANCES	0.400	0.400	0.00%
AL. DAWLAH	0.680	0.680	+1.72%
ARAB INTL TRADE	0.210	0.200	-4.76%
SPECIALIZED INVE	1.040	0.850	-18.30%
OPTICAL & AUDIO	0.410	0.420	+2.44%
READY MIX CONCRET	0.830	0.800	-3.61%
CENTURY	1.200	1.150	-4.17%
VARCO	0.340	0.340	0.00%
ELECTRICAL IND	0.350	0.350	0.00%
MIDDLE EAST PHAR	0.630	0.600	-4.76%
UNION TOBACCO	3.350	3.850	+14.93%
AL. RAZI	0.580	0.580	0.00%
UNITED ENG. IND	0.220	0.190	-13.64%
INTL CERAMIC	0.400	0.380	-5.00%
NTL POULTRY	0.550	0.530	-3.64%
NUTRI DAR	0.720	0.700	-2.78%
GRAND INDEX	178.18	point =	+1.51%

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

DAJANI JEWELLERS

"WE DEFINE STYLE"

Amra Forum
Hotel, Amman

Many villas and apartments for rent and sale

Furnished & Unfurnished

For more information call:
Abdoun Real Estate
5920605/5920609/079530007

Web Site is
www.abdoun.com.jo

STUDIO HAIG

Professional quality in 1 hour service

Develop your colour film at our shop and get:

- * JUMBO photo size 30% larger.
- * Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm.

Shmelsani - Opposite Grindlays Bank
Phone: 5604042
Sweifish Tel: 822891

Your Address In Amman

CRYSTAL

Quality Serviced Suites

- * One & Two Bedrooms * Fully Equipped Kitchens * Daily & Long Stay * Reasonable Rates

5th Circle
Tel: 5692672 - Fax: 5674551
e-mail: crystal@go.com.jo

FOR RENT

Deluxe Villas and Apartments

SANABEL Real Estate

SWEIFYEH
A Hajarat Complex
Tel: 5864230 - 5865167
Mobile: 079/537588

Amra Forum Hotel

Shehrazad Restaurant

Over Amman by Night
at the Amra Roof Top Restaurant.

your Friendly Host

Bayerischer Hof

German Restaurant

LUNCH: 12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
DINNER: 6:30 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.

German coffee and cakes served all day

Sweifish - Al Hamra Street Tel: 5819730 / 5810811
PO Box 6555, Amman-11118 Jordan

Hingis advances to semifinals, Davenport eliminated

TOKYO (AP) — Australian Open champion Martina Hingis rebounded for a 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 victory over Steffi Graf of Germany Friday, advancing to the semifinals in the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament for women.

In the day's biggest upset, defending champion and top-seeded Lindsay Davenport of the United States lost to No. 7 seed Amelbeg Coetzer of South Africa 2-6, 6-4, 6-3.

With Davenport eliminated, the Swiss teenager now can get back to the top WTA rank if she beats third seed Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic Saturday to reach the final.

Davenport surged ahead of Hingis to the No. 1 rank last Oct. 12.

Novotna took the first set 7-5 over eighth-seeded Natasha Zvereva of Belarus, who then retired with eye problems.

In another match in the round of eight players, fourth seed Monica Seles of the United States defeated sixth-seeded Anna Kournikova of Russia 7-5, 6-3.

On Saturday, Seles meets Coetzer.

Second-seeded Hingis regained rhythm in the second set after an error-filled first set with three service breaks against one by Graf.

Graf, fifth-seeded, went ahead 3-1 in the final set but Hingis rebounded with some big serves, big ground shots and sharpshooting.

Graf had to take a three-minute medical time for cramps in the left thigh midway through the final 10th game in the third set, while Hingis drew a loud applause for juggling with three tennis balls.

"Next time I'll try to show the audience juggling with four or five balls," Hingis said. "I practiced it because we had a circus at school when I



Martina Hingis of Switzerland returns the ball during her quarter final match against Steffi Graf of Germany in the Toray Pan Pacific Open women's tennis tournament in Tokyo Feb. 5. Hingis defeated Graf 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 (AFP photo)

was nine or 10. I wasn't doing that show but everybody was doing something.

"When I was younger she was killing me all the time. I was 14 or 15-years-old playing her, then No. 1 in the world. But this time I am a different player," Hingis said of her 2-6 career record against Graf.

Graf said she started getting cramps at 3-1 in the final set.

"At that time I knew it was very difficult to finish the match ... and I knew I could barely run any more," she said.

Davenport said she hoped the day's match was just a bump in the road.

"I just didn't play very smart and made a lot of errors and I didn't serve very well. And she definitely took advantage of that," Davenport said.

About the WTA ranking, the 22-year-old Davenport said, "You know I'm not playing like the No. 1 player in the world and I think Martina fully deserves it right now. I have to start to play a lot better."

In the doubles semifinals Saturday, Davenport and Zvereva play against Argentine Patricia Tarabini and her partner Caroline Vis of the Netherlands.

With 15 golds, China secures top place; Kazakhstan adds three

YONGPYONG, South Korea (AP) — China's Xue Ruihong and South Korea's Choi Jae-bong grabbed their second gold medals in the Winter Asian Games Friday by winning the women's and men's 1,000-metre speedskating races.

With one more day and one gold medal left, China was leading the medal count with 15 golds. South Korea was next with 11, trailed by Kazakhstan with nine and Japan with six.

On the sixth day of competition, China and Kazakhstan each raked in three golds. Japan collected two. Uzbekistan and South Korea each walked away with one.

Chinese Shen Xue and Zhao Hongbo grabbed the gold in the pairs figure skating competition. The Chinese pair of Wang Rui and Zhang Wei took China's third gold of the day when they won the ice dancing event.

In women's 1,000-metre speedskating, China's Xue, the winner of Wednesday's 500 metres, clocked in at 1 minute, 23.61 seconds, beating fellow Chinese Yang Chunyuan by 0.03 of a second.

China has taken three of four golds in women's speedskating.

Kazakhstan's Svetlana Shishkova won the women's 10-kilometre (6.2-mile) free-style cross-country race, beating rival Sumiko Yokoyama of Japan by 12.5 seconds.

Shishkova finished in 27:02.8, ahead of Yokoyama, who beat her in the 5-kilometre sprint Monday. The Kazaks have taken all but one of the six cross-country races.

The Kazaks also swept both the men's and women's four-by-7.5 kilometre biathlon relays.

The four-man squad of Alexey Karevskiy, Sergey Abdurakov, Dmitry Pantov and Dmitry Pozdnyakov finished the relay in a total time of 1:38:15.3, ahead of Japan and South Korea.

Its women's team of Galina Avtayeve, Margarita Dulova, Yelena Dubok and Lyudmila Guryeva came in at 1:50:32.9, beating China and South Korea.

Japan's Rina Seki won her first gold in women's downhill slalom skiing. She finished the two runs down the 520-metre slope in a combined

1:47.57. Toshihito Itokawa gave Japan its second gold of the day in the men's 10-kilometre speedskating in 15:05.13.

South Korea's Choi won his second gold in as many days when he finished the men's 1,000 metres in 1:14.74. Choi also won the 1,500 metres Thursday.

Uzbekistan's Talyana Malinina gave her country's its first gold medal when she beat Japanese Shizuka Arakawa and Fumie Suguri in the women's singles figure skating.

Meanwhile, in the eastern coast city of Kangnung, Mongolia's nascent ice hockey team beat Kuwait 5-4 to avoid the humiliating last place in men's ice hockey.

Mongolia had allowed 54 goals and scored only one in the two previous matches and had longed to dignify itself when it met with Kuwait, which had lost two earlier matches by a combined score of 79-1.

The Winter Asian Games ends Saturday with the men's ice hockey match between Kazakhstan and Japan.

Iranian star faces lengthy ban for referee assault

HO CHI MINH CITY (AFP) — Iran's new star goalscorer Mohamad Ali Karimi faces a lengthy ban for his attack on a referee at the Dunhill Cup here.

Karimi, 21, was one of the heroes of Iran's Asian Games winning side in December and has attracted attention from European clubs.

But the Asian Football Confederation disciplinary committee will meet in Kuala Lumpur next Thursday to consider action after Karimi kicked and pushed Japanese referee Toru Kamikawa in a match against Vietnam on Tuesday.

Such an assault on a match official can lead to a ban of up to two years.

Karimi was sent off and suspended for the rest of the tournament. He has apologised to Kamikawa but can expect no mercy from the AFC.

If the confederation goes for the maximum penalty it will

take a convincing appeal by a contrite player and his apologetic national federation to get it reduced.

Karimi was one of two Iranians sent off in a tense two minutes midway through the match against the hosts.

Ali Ansanian collected his second yellow card in the 69th minute for a tackle from behind. Iranian players immediately surrounded Kamikawa to protest the decision and Karimi pulled Kamikawa's shirt and kicked him in the shins.

A host of European scouts followed Karimi at the Asian Games in Bangkok. Ali Daei and Khodadad Azizi already play in Germany.

But the Iranian federation told them that the attacking midfielder must stay in Iran for at least another year. Any move could now be even further away.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Sports leader visits oman

GENEVA (KUNA) — KUNA learnt today that FIFA president Sepp Blatter will visit the Sultanate of Oman Saturday to Monday, blatter will attend in Muscat an international friendly match between Oman and Slovenia at the Sultan Qabus sports complex. He will also meet the personal representative of Sultan Qabus, the president and board of directors of the Oman Football Association, and the president of the General Organisation for Sports and Cultural Activities for Youth. Blatter is scheduled to hold a news conference during his visit to Muscat.

Chicago Bulls sign first ever Hungarian NBA player

BUDAPEST (AFP) — Basketball player Kornel David became the first Hungarian to join an NBA team on Thursday when he signed a two-year contract with the Chicago Bulls, winners of six championships in the past eight seasons. "Everything took place so fast. Two weeks ago I was playing in the Hungarian championship and now I have a contract with the world's most successful team," said David, who has been playing with the west Hungarian Szekesfehervar Albaomp-SZUV team. The 29-year-old David, who will play either guard or center with the number 18 shirt, will receive the minimum wage of the league, an annual \$270,000. The Bulls have had to heavily rebuild since coach Phil Jackson refused to return, while legendary player Michael Jordan retired and other championship winning players Scottie Pippen, Australian centre Luc Longley, Steve Kerr and the colourful and unpredictable Dennis Rodman jumped ship to other teams.

Wilkins looks for NBA comeback at 39

ORLANDO, Florida (AFP) — Dominique Wilkins, trying to make a National Basketball Association comeback at the age of 39, will sign with the Orlando Magic by the end of the week it was reported on Thursday. The nine-time NBA All-star, who played last season in Italy, will make his return for the first time since 1997, when he averaged 18.2 points a game with San Antonio. Wilkins has 26,534 points in 14 NBA seasons, the eighth-highest scoring total in league history, and averaged 25.3 points a game. Wilkins averaged 30.3 points in 1986 to lead the NBA, making him the last man to win a scoring title in the league other than Michael Jordan in a season during which Jordan played a full campaign.

Prince Albert disillusioned with Monaco

MONACO (R) — Prince Albert, usually a regular at Monaco's home matches wearing his red and white scarf, is so disappointed with their form this season he has given up going to the Stade Louis II. "I've already warned (club president Mr Jean-Louis) Campora that I won't come back as long as the team can't string three wins together," the prince said in an interview published on Friday. "I'm not getting any pleasure watching my club play this season, even if they win." Prince Albert, an International Olympic Committee member, told L'Equipe in Lausanne where he was attending the world conference on doping in sport. The prince, whose father Prince Rainier is the club's main financial backer, criticised Campora and hinted there could be changes in the club leadership. "It's clear that this club is lacking leadership," Prince Albert said. "We don't have anyone in place with the necessary charisma." He also criticised the dreadful state of the Stade Louis II pitch which has been slammed by visiting and home players. Monaco, French champions in 1997 and European Cup semifinalists last year, have struggled this season. They are sixth in the first division, 16 points adrift of leaders Girondins Bordeaux, and out of both domestic cup competitions. Coach Jean Tigana resigned in mid-January as was replaced by his assistant Claude Puel.

Brazilian chief confident of 2006 success

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) boss Ricardo Teixeira believes Brazil can count on at least six of the 23 FIFA executive committee votes that will decide which country stages the 2006 World Cup, it was reported Friday.

Teixeira believes the three Latin American representatives and the three from CONCACAF (the body governing North American, Central America and the Caribbean football) will back Brazil's bid. The South American country has already staged one World Cup in 1950.

With the European vote split between England and Germany and Africa's split between five candidates, although South Africa is the leading contender, Teixeira remained bullish.

He said: "With the help of the private finance initiative and our own structures we will be one of the favourites."

"Our greatest asset is the prestige of the national team, which for six years has been top of the FIFA rankings."



Former soccer star Argentinian Diego Armando Maradona (C) is accompanied by police and surrounded by media as he arrives at Malpensa 2000 airport outside Milan, Feb. 4. Reportedly the former SSC Naples soccer star, arriving here on Thursday coming from Buenos Aires, is in Italy to be questioned in the doping affair (AFP photo)

CINEMA	TEL: 9674114	CINEMA	TEL: 4634144	CINEMA	TEL: 5699238	CINEMA	TEL: 5677420	CINEMA	TEL: 5934793	CINEMA	TEL: 5934793	Risham Yanes Theatre	TEL: 4625155
PHILADELPHIA '1'		PHILADELPHIA '2'		PLAZA		CONCORDE		GALLERIA 1		GALLERIA 2		SOON...	
Bruce Willis .. in		Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shinawi .. in		Comedian Adel Enmam .. in		Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shinawi .. in		ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria		ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria		ILHAQ YA TARAWNEH	
MERCURY RISING		ALWAD MAHROUS TRA' AL WAZIR		AL ZA'EEM		TRA' AL WAZIR		THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY		LETHAL WEAPON 4		Hisham Yanis & Amal Al Dabbas	
Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30		Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30		Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45		Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30			
						CONCORDE '2'				MULAN			
						SleepWalkers				Shows: 3:30, 5:00			
						Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only							

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

Ali final by brea



... a young ... Ali ... time (AFP)

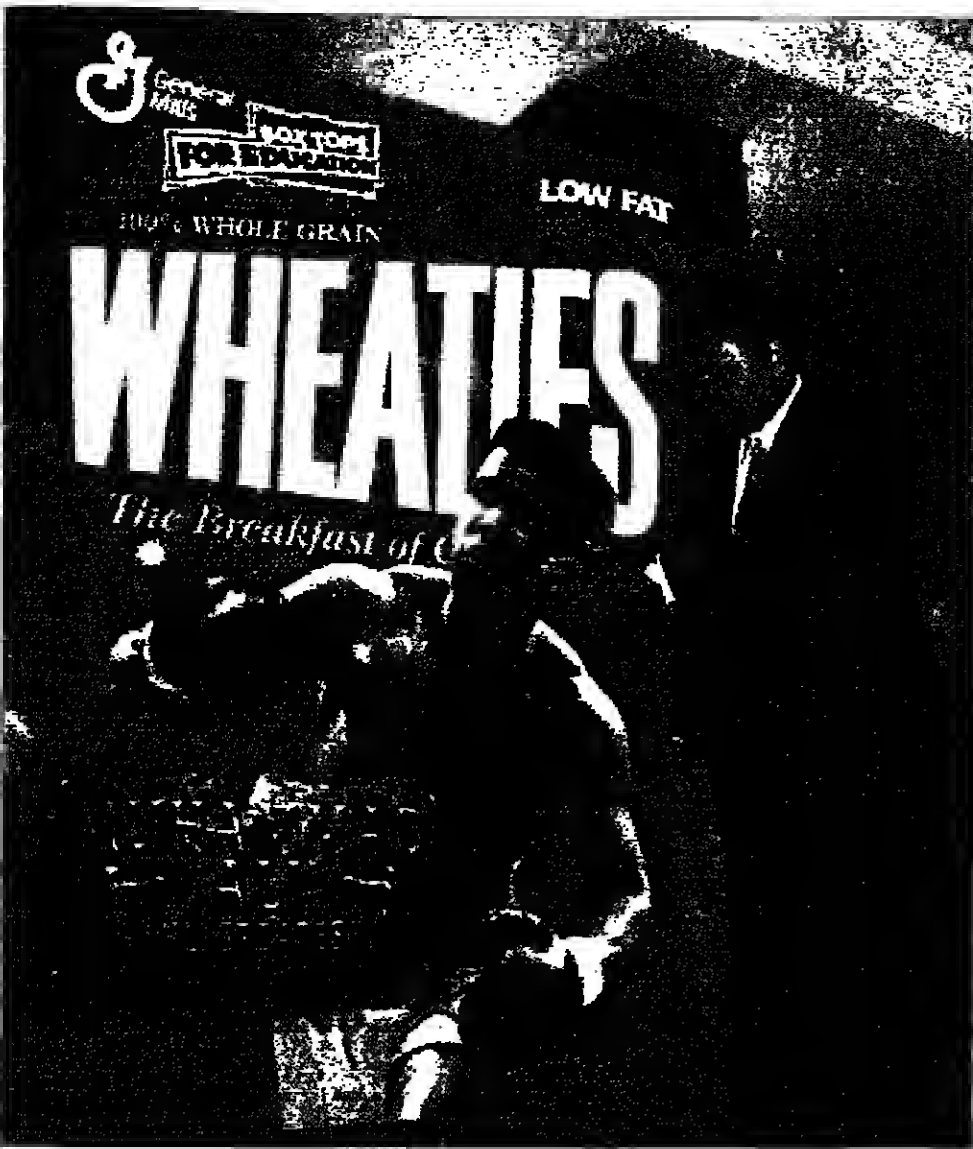
AC Milan top 10 i

LONDON (R) — Former Euro ... Milan ... victory with a bor

TOP (last we

- 1 Bayern Munich
- 2 Fiorentina
- 3 Lazio
- 4 Parma
- 5 Girondins Bordeaux
- 6 Bayer Leverkusen
- 7 Olympique Marseille
- 8 Inter Milan
- 9 Dynamo Kiev
- 10 AC Milan
- 11 Manchester United
- 12 Barcelona
- 13 AS Roma
- 14 Rosenborg Tromsø
- 15 Dinamo Ruzharsk
- 16 Celta Vigo
- 17 Porto
- 18 Partizan Belgrade
- 19 Real Madrid
- 20 Rapid Bucharest

Ali finally accepted by breakfast cereal



Muhammad Ali touches a younger version of himself which is on the special edition Muhammad Ali Wheaties box that marks the cereal's 75th anniversary Feb. 4. Wheaties, "The Breakfast of Champions," is honouring the man widely accepted as one of the greatest athletes of all time (AFP photo)

NEW YORK (R) — Wheaties finally became the Breakfast of Champions Thursday.

Many years after Muhammad Ali came to be revered around the world the people who sell the corn flakes decided it was politically and profitably correct to jump onto the fabled boxer's bandwagon and put his picture on their cereal box.

Ali joins a long list of American sports heroes — although the first African American was not until Walter Payton in 1986 — to be so prominently featured by the 75-year-old brand, which bills itself as "The Breakfast of Champions."

The former three-time heavyweight champion has been dramatically slowed by Parkinson's disease and can only mumble his words. But as he demonstrated Thursday at a news conference at Madison Square Garden — the site of some of his most memorable fights — the 57-year-old Ali still is able to project the renowned, often irreverent wit that annoyed, dazzled

and ultimately captivated people around the world.

Before that, however, he was reviled by many in America for his refusal to be drafted into military service for the Vietnam War. His explanation became legendary: "Man, I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong."

For his refusal to be drafted, Ali had his boxing license suspended.

Ali was asked why he thought it took Wheaties so long to recognize him.

"The Vietnam War. We ended up admitting it was wrong and we shouldn't have been there ... all the talking 'I'm the greatest' and all the bragging and the style I had when I first started, that stopped," said Ali, adding to laughter, "I'm still pretty."

And then in vintage Ali, the former Cassius Clay, the man they once called "The Louisville Lip," said with a slight smile to the reporter, "you're not as dumb as you look."

Ali's wife, Lonnie, said it more simply when answering for her husband about

Wheaties delay in recognising him: "At the height of his career in the 60s, he might have been a little too controversial ... (The Wheaties box) was an honour a long time coming."

After the curtain was dropped from a large picture of the Ali Wheaties box, Ali gently rubbed the photograph of his chin and dutifully posed for publicity shots with fists slowly clenching at his side.

But the symbol of the Ali that especially in recent years has endeared himself to millions of people around the world came as he was leaving.

Clusters of children were heading toward the entrance to see the circus. They gathered around him as if he were a pied piper.

And the former fighter, who once a long time ago had the quickest feet and fastest hands of anyone, slowly stooped, and like grandfathers everywhere overcome by a special desire, gently picked up first one and then another little girl and kissed her on the cheek.

Chaos helps NBA global group grow

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Now, more than ever, National Basketball Association teams will rely on talent from beyond the United States to build championship clubs in a chaotic season.

Teams play 50 games in 90 days starting Friday after a lull in play due to three months and 32 games and touched off an unprecedented wave of transfers and long-term contract deals.

Dutch center Rik Smits anchors favored Indiana. Jamaican-born Patrick Ewing mans the middle in New York. African-born centres Hakeem Olajuwon of Houston and Dikembe Mutombo of Atlanta make their teams contenders.

But a new set of centres will test the stars, led by Shaquille O'Neal, NBA Rookie of the Year Tim Duncan and Lithuanian Zydrunas Ilgauskas, who signed a six-year deal with Cleveland worth \$71 million.

"As the older guys move on, the Patrick and Olajuwons, you will choose from Tim Duncan and Shaquilles," Cleveland coach Mike Fratello said. "You have to look at the other guys up there and I think Ilgauskas has the potential to be an All-Star."

The rebuilding Chicago Bulls have signed Kornel David, the NBA's first Hungarian player, moved Canada's Bill Wennington to start at center and focused the team around Croatia's Toni Kukoc.

"Toni has stepped up as our go-

to guy," Bulls coach Tim Floyd said. "He will have to do a lot and we will give him the freedom to do it."

An Australian trio could have a major impact, with former Bulls center Luc Longley now in Phoenix, Chris Anstey manning the middle in Dallas and long-range sharpshooter Andrew Gaze joining San Antonio.

"Luc has looked quite good," Phoenix coach Danny Ainge said.

"He's not a player who does anything great. He does a lot of things good. He's a good passer, a good shooter, has a high body and experience."

"We're excited to have him. I don't want to put a lot of pressure on him. I don't think he is a superstar. He fills a role for us. Luc has played on some great teams and that has to rub off to some extent."

Gaze will join former Bulls guard Steve Kerr in providing an outside threat to go with San Antonio's inside powers, David Robinson and Duncan.

"He's one of the premier shooters in the world," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "This guy is a good enough player that he can jump right in. The (cut to) 50 games does hurt him as far as having a better shot to get into the main rotation."

"He hasn't had time to get used to the system, both ours and the NBA. It takes a little time. It's tough to make that big a jump that quickly."

Anstey surprised Don Nelson with his work ethic, literally forcing the Dallas coach to find him a pivotal role on the team.

"I have to find a way to play him this year even though I am very deep in (power forwards). I assumed he needed another hard year of practicing. Anstey is right up there ahead of some of the guys."

He has had tremendous training camp.

"He is a very playable player. He's wiry, strong and very clever. He's a very bright guy and gifted athletically. I can't believe a guy who can do those world class things at 7 feet tall can't be a great player."

Canadian guard Steve Nash has also impressed the Mavericks' mentor.

"He's another player who is going to get a lot better but we think he is awfully good right now," Nelson said. "He's as good an all-around player as I have ever had at point guard."

But the top global star in Dallas is German Dirk Nowitzki. He averaged 13 points, six rebounds and three assists in two exhibition games.

"He's terrific. We're very excited about him," Nelson said. "He can do all the things you want him to do. He's awfully good right now. I would hate to see what he's going to be like in two or three years."

Vancouver has the NBA's top

Hispanic talents, Venezuelan Carl Herrera and Dominican rookie Felipe Lopez.

"I have been very impressed at what Felipe has done so far, getting in our rotation," Grizzlies coach Doug Hill said. "He's very good off the dribble, attacking and getting to the free throw line."

He has the attitude and work ethic, the talent and enthusiasm.

There's no reason down the road he can't be a starting guard in the NBA."

Long-suffering Sacramento has Yugoslavians Vlade Divac and Predrag Stojakovic, who averaged 15 points and five rebounds in two exhibitions.

"He has got a great feel for the game," Kings coach Rick Adelman said.

On Divac, Adelman added, "One of the big things he has brought to this young group is he's a leader. He's encouraging all the time."

I was surprised he would be that vocal. He's pushing the other guys to stay positive. He does adapt. He finds a way to make others more effective."

Nigerian-born Michael Olowokandi, the top pick in last year's NBA draft, joins a Los Angeles Clippers team that lost 65 times last season.

"He's a bright young man with a great upside," Clippers coach Chris Ford said. "He's ready. Some guys are playing themselves into shape."

Salt Lake committee to reorganise in wake of scandal

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt and Salt Lake Organising Committee Chairman Robert Garff have declined to say whether board members who also were on the bid committee will remain on SLOC.

"We'll have to see if any of those people are implicated," Garff said. "We will review those facts and then take decisive action."

The reorganization announced Thursday would include 17 or 18 new spots on the SLOC board of trustees. The board's executive committee would be replaced with a new management group ordered to keep a tight rein on planning.

The proposal by Garff and Leavitt will be voted on next week by the full board. That vote will come two days after it gets a report from an independent ethics panel investigating Salt Lake City's bid.

Investigators have found the bid committee gave more than \$1 million in cash, free medical care, travel and scholarships to IOC members or their relatives before the 1995 IOC vote giving Salt Lake City the Olympics.

Garff said he and Leavitt have not offered the job of SLOC chief executive to anyone, and refused to discuss Mitt Romney, the man believed to be the front-runner. Romney is a Boston venture capitalist and former Republican Senate candidate.

The new chief executive would replace Frank Joklik, who resigned Jan. 8 but remains on the job until he is replaced.

The 17 or 18 new board members, to be chosen by Leavitt and Mayor Deedee Corradini, likely would be ready to join the board on Feb. 11, Garff said. "We

have a reasonable expectation it will be approved," he said.

Garff and Leavitt declined to say whether board members who also were on the bid committee will remain on SLOC.

"We'll have to see if any of those people are implicated," Garff said. "We will review those facts and then take decisive action."

The roles of First Security Corp. Chairman Spence Eccles and PacificCorp Vice President Verl Topham, who are both on the current executive committee, have come under question. They were enlisted during Salt Lake's bidding for the games to watch over staffers now blamed for excesses.

Leavitt declined to say whether restructuring of the board might mean ridding it of businessmen who are doing business with SLOC.

The SLOC ethics committee investigating the scandal also has looked at contracts awarded by the SLOC board to some of its members. A \$23.2 million contract went to a construction company headed by board trustee Alan Layton to build a top for a speed skating oval. SLOC board member Earl Holding is owner of Snowbasin ski resort, where the downhill races will be staged.

The reorganization is designed to broaden community representation and give more responsibility to the management committee. However, the enlarged board of trustees would lose its decision-making authority, playing only an advisory role for the management committee.

Besides the seven at-

large members elected by the full board, the management committee would include Leavitt, Garff, Corradini, a new SLOC president and chief executive, four athletes, three U.S. Olympic Committee officials and two IOC representatives.

Leavitt on Thursday also elaborated on a statement that he knew little about the excessive spending on International Olympic Committee members by a few bid executives.

He said he met about 50 IOC members and their families, posed for photographs and gave obligatory gifts of diplomacy.

"I did not ever personally see a gift of great value," Leavitt said.

He said he did not know that the international students he met were sons and daughters of IOC members, some supported by bid money, and he repeated an earlier assertion that the lavish spending was hidden from him and the bid committee by bid executives.

"Was there a pattern of deception? Yes," Leavitt said.

"They had to hide it. I didn't see it and I don't know of anyone else who did."

Leavitt dismissed allegations to the contrary by Tom Welch, the former bid committee president who has been blamed for the excesses.

"It's not unexpected from someone who is feeling a lot of pressure because of past actions," Leavitt said.

In other scandal developments — Welch denied he told the Cable News Network in a telephone interview on Wednesday

that the bid committee took \$50,000 in cash to Budapest, where the IOC chose Salt Lake for the games. In a news release Thursday, Welch said he told CNN that he didn't know about any cash, but if it was carried to Budapest, it was to pay routine expenses of the Salt Lake delegation.

Rep. Merrill Cook, Republican of Utah, said the \$150 million Congress has approved so Utah can prepare its highways, airport and mass transit systems before the Olympics is safe.

Rep. John Dingle, Democrat of Michigan, has asked the General Accounting Office to determine whether Salt Lake is being rewarded with federal dollars after using shady means to get the games.

That money cannot now be withdrawn, and neither can the legislation that authorizes the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to give funding priority in coming years to Salt Lake and other host cities, Cook said.

However, securing money might be tough in the future, he said. "It's a political reality that Congress is nervous about giving federal funds to projects tainted by scandal. We have our work cut out for us."

The Washington Post said FBI agents and Olympic ethics investigators are examining evidence that Salt Lake Olympic organisers used airline tickets to disguise illicit payments to several IOC members.

It said the tickets, bought at premium prices by the

Salt Lake committee, in some instances were cashed in or traded for less-expensive fares. Investigators were examining whether there was an understanding between some IOC members and the Salt Lake organisers that the tickets would serve as a form of payoff in return for support of the city's Olympic bid, the officials said.

Bid cities in recent years have complained about IOC members' demands for exorbitant or multiple airline tickets. Norman M. Seagram, an organiser for Toronto's unsuccessful bid for the 1996 Summer Games, last month said he helped draft a 1991 report to the IOC alleging IOC members had engaged in practices designed to benefit financially from airline tickets. The IOC never followed up.

An IOC member from South Korea denied today that Salt Lake City Olympic officials helped find a job for his son in the United States and reimbursed part of his salary.

Kim Un-yong, the only member of the IOC's executive board implicated in the Salt Lake City bribery scandal, said the allegations against him were part of a plot to discredit him and his close ally, Olympic chief Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Kim spoke in reaction to USA Today's report that Kim's only son, Kim Jung-boon, was employed by a Utah company, Keystone Communications, at the request of Salt Lake City officials who campaigned to land the 2002 Winter Games.

AC Milan move back into top 10 in club rankings

LONDON (R) — Former European champions AC Milan moved back into the top 10 in the European club rankings for the first time since November this week thanks to their 3-2 win over Salernitana last Sunday.

Milan, who jumped two places, will have a tough task retaining their position as they travel to Florence to play Serie A leaders Fiorentina on Sunday. Fiorentina are second in the rankings but are well adrift of leaders Bayern Munich. Lazio, on an eight-match winning streak, are third and have a good chance of a ninth consecutive victory with a home game against Perugia on Sunday.

TOP 20 CLUB RANKINGS (last week's position in brackets)

			Points
(1)	1 Bayern Munich	Germany	100.94
(3)	2 Fiorentina	Italy	91.04
(2)	3 Lazio	Italy	90.54
(4)	4 Parma	Italy	87.21
(6)	5 Girondins Bordeaux	France	86.36
(7)	6 Bayer Leverkusen	Germany	84.19
(5)	7 Olympique Marseille	France	82.88
(8)	8 Inter Milan	Italy	82.49
(9)	9 Dynamo Kiev	Ukraine	81.93
(12)	10 AC Milan	Italy	78.88
(13)	11 Manchester United	England	78.35
(16)	12 Barcelona	Spain	78.00
(11)	13 AS Roma	Italy	77.25
(14)	14 Rosenborg Trondheim	Norway	76.94
(15)	15 Dinamo Bucharest	Romania	76.91
(10)	16 Celta Vigo	Spain	75.39
(22)	17 Porto	Portugal	74.38
(18)	18 Partizan Belgrade	Yugoslavia	73.90
(26)	19 Real Madrid	Spain	73.88
(21)	20 Rapid Bucharest	Romania	73.64

Forget Hoddle, we just want to win at Wembley, say France

PARIS (AFP) — French coach Roger Lemerre sidestepped the Glenn Hoddle controversy here on Thursday, stressing instead that the World champions were just determined to make history by beating England at Wembley for the first time.

Lemerre, speaking after unveiling his 18-man squad for the game on February 10, said: "It's a nice challenge for us as World Cup holders, to become the first French team to win at the mythical temple of football that is Wembley."

He refused to discuss Hoddle's dismissal this week for reportedly saying that disabled people were being were

punished for sins of a former life, saying only: "C'est la vie."

But he refused to accept that France would run out as easy winners because of England's crisis.

"It's easy to scoff at English football for being one-dimensional and to be condescending about it," he said.

"That's an insult to all that the English have done for football."

He argued, however, that France had managed to marry the English strengths of determination and toughness to their own ball skills.

History, however, he said, was in favour of the home side. They have won

23 of 33 matches against France, including their last meeting in 1997, and lost only six times, none at Wembley.

Lemerre said he would definitely start the game with a big target man leading the attack — a typically English tactic — by selecting Lilian Laslandes.

Laslandes did not play in the World Cup but Lemerre said the Bordeaux striker was ideally suited to play against England.

France include a string of World Cup heroes based in the English Premiership: defenders Marcel Desailly and Franck Leboeuf (Chelsea), midfielders Emmanuel Petit and Patrick

Vieira and striker Nicolas Anelka (all Arsenal).

The game will help the French warm up for their next Euro 2000 home match against the Ukraine on March 27.

French squad — goalkeepers: Fabien Barthez, Stephane Porato.

Defenders: Laurent Blanc, Vincent Candela, Lilian Thuram, Bixente Lizarazu, Marcel Desailly, Frank Leboeuf. Midfielders: Youri Djorkaeff, Alain Boghossian, Zinedine Zidane, Didier Deschamps, Emmanuel Petit, Patrick Vieira. Forwards: Christophe Dugary, Nicolas Anelka, Lilian Laslandes, Robert Pires.

Knesset adopts budget after funds added for settlers, religious causes

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's parliament finally adopted a state budget for 1999 early Friday but only after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to more spending for Jewish settlements and religious causes.

After an all-night debate which often degenerated into shouting matches and insults between deputies of the governing coalition and the opposition, the budget was passed at dawn by a vote of 48 to 34 in the 120-member Knesset.

Netanyahu, who holds the finance portfolio since minister Yaacov Neeman resigned in December out of frustration with coalition hickering over the budget, had to agree to a series of demands from minor right-wing and religious parties to finally get the law passed.

In total Netanyahu agreed to additional spending of

\$51 million shekels (\$137 million) in a total budget of around 215 billion shekels (\$54 billion).

The last minute changes involved promising an additional \$38 million to Jewish settlers in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights for settlement construction, tourism development projects and additional security.

The rest of the increase mainly concerned funding for religious education and other projects demanded by ultra-Orthodox groups and the ultra-nationalist National Religious Party.

A further \$2.5 million was promised for subsidised housing for new immigrants at the demand of the Russian immigrant party Israel B'Aliya.

Netanyahu promised during the debate that the additional funds would not expand the overall budget

but would be financed out of reserves and that the government's target of limiting the budget deficit to two per cent of gross domestic product would be respected. The deficit stood at 2.4 per cent of GDP in 1998.

The last minute spending increases agreed by Netanyahu fell far short of what the smaller parties in his unruly coalition had been demanding and which some estimates put as high as \$500 million.

Opposition Labour Party deputies charged that Netanyahu had made behind the scenes promises to some parties that would double the additional spending for their pet projects if he wins reelection in May.

But Netanyahu insisted he had limited the extra spending to levels traditionally doled out during budget debates in the multi-party

Israeli parliament, including under earlier Labour governments.

The budget dispute contributed to the collapse last month of Netanyahu's parliamentary majority and the calling of elections in May, a year-and-a-half earlier than scheduled.

The Knesset was formally adjourned Tuesday ahead of the elections but was brought back in special session to debate and vote on the budget.

With unemployment running above eight per cent and the economy undergoing its worst slowdown in a decade, the opposition has made Netanyahu's handling of economic matters a central campaign issue.

Opinion polls show Netanyahu running neck-and-neck against his main challenger for the prime ministership, Labour Party leader Ehud Barak.



WOMEN ATTEND VIGIL FOR KING: Several women weep Friday under heavy rains outside Al Hussein Medical Centre in Amman, where His Majesty King Hussein is hospitalised (AFP photo)

Serbs reject talks with KLA, block rebel negotiators

PRISTINA (AP) — Serb authorities put weekend peace talks on Kosovo in jeopardy Friday, blocking ethnic Albanian rebels from leaving for France and later saying they won't negotiate with the guerrillas at all.

"We will never negotiate with the terrorists," Serb delegation chief Ratko Markovic told reporters in Paris.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the abrupt announcement meant the Serbs would boycott talks as proposed by world powers, but it underscored the huge negotiating obstacles even if all sides take part.

Five members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) were set to be a part of a larger ethnic Albanian delegation at talks scheduled to start at Rambouillet outside Paris on Saturday afternoon.

But the Kosovo Albanian delegation remained in Kosovo on Friday after an hours-long diplomatic standoff, with Serb officials reportedly balking because two KLA members lacked pass-

ports.

Markovic's comments suggested the issue went beyond passports.

"We consider the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army a terrorist organisation, and with killers and kidnappers we have nothing to talk about," Markovic said.

He said the Serbian delegation, which arrived in Paris Friday afternoon, was ready to negotiate only with ethnic Albanian politicians. But the Kosovo Albanians signalled earlier that they are certain not to agree to such a move.

In a rare show of solidarity, political figures who have long been at odds with the guerrillas refused to leave Kosovo without their fellow negotiators.

The United States and its five European allies had hoped to include all Kosovo's factions in the negotiations, and U.S. chief verifier William Walker said he was "shocked" at the Serbs' refusal to negotiate with the rebels.

"I would say they are missing the point of what negotia-

tions are," Walker said by telephone in Pristina. "We had such pronouncements earlier, but things would usually change."

U.S. special envoy Christopher Hill demanded in Paris that all Kosovo Albanians slated to participate be allowed to depart for France.

Officials of the six-nation Balkan Contact Group, who had been working to get the KLA members to Paris, pressured government officials into the evening to drop their resistance, but with no visible results.

Meanwhile, hoping to keep the pressure on, Western powers announced further preparations for a peacekeeping force. British Defence Secretary George Robertson announced he was putting several military units and 8,000 troops on standby for possible deployment in Kosovo.

The Serb defiance Friday came only a day after the Serbs grudgingly had accepted participation in the talks in Rambouillet, where world

powers demand they reach a political settlement with Albanian separatists to end 11 months of war.

Deepening the skepticism surrounding the talks, ethnic Albanian officials criticised the Serbs' selection Friday of a mixture of top allies to President Slobodan Milosevic and little-known ethnic leaders as negotiators.

Rexhep Qosja, a Kosovo Albanian politician and negotiator, complained that the Serb delegation is too low in rank to make any hard decisions. "It is not an echelon that can make decisions," he said.

Most of the Kosovo Albanian team had planned to fly to France early Friday afternoon in a C-130 jet sent by the French government, although three of five KLA negotiators had already left via other means.

But the two other KLA members reportedly stayed away from the airport, awaiting assurance they could board the plane without being arrested. The political representatives on the Albanian

team returned to the provincial capital when the impasse wasn't resolved.

"We are not going to leave Pristina if we are not complete," said negotiator Veton Surroi.

An official for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which runs the Kosovo monitoring mission, delivered a blunt message: "The Serbs will be held accountable if the Rambouillet talks do not go forward," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Four notable Milosevic allies besides Markovic were among those named as Serb negotiators: Yugoslav Deputy Premier Nikola Sainovic, Vladan Kutlesic, Vladimir Stambuk and Vojislav Zivkovic.

But the eight others were obscure representatives from mostly tiny ethnic communities in Albanian-majority Kosovo.

The composition of the Serb government team indicates that Serbia will insist on its

stand that ethnic Albanians, although they form 90 per cent of Kosovo's population, should have no greater rights in the province than other, much less-populous groups.

Serbian Information Minister Milan Kammenic told German television that Serbia would accept autonomy — "even a substantial one" — for Kosovo and warned that if the talks failed, "war would then be unavoidable."

Relinquishing their own uncompromising stance, the rebels issued a statement late Friday saying they were taking to France their demands for "liberty, independence and democracy for Kosovo."

They also insisted that they, not Albanian political faction representatives, should lead the Kosovo Albanian population.

More than 2,000 people have been killed in Kosovo since last February. In the latest violence, a bomb exploded Friday night in a Serb-run cafe in Pristina. No injuries were reported.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NYC police slaying of man probed

NEW YORK (R) — Officials on Friday were investigating why four police officers fired 41 shots at an unarmed immigrant street peddler with no criminal record, killing him as he entered his Bronx apartment building. "It looks like one guy may have panicked and the rest followed suit," a police official who spoke on condition of anonymity told The New York Times on Friday. Police identified the man as Ahmed Diallo, 22, and said he was unarmed and had no previous criminal record. Friends said Diallo emigrated from Guinea after fleeing civil strife in Mauritania in 1997. Working 12-hour days as a peddler on Manhattan's 14th Street, he sent much of his earnings home to his parents in West Africa, they said.

Khatami to meet Pope

VATICAN CITY (R) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami is scheduled to meet Pope John Paul II during a visit to Italy next month, Vatican sources said on Friday. They said the meeting, the first by an Iranian president since the Islamic revolution and the fall of the Shah in 1979, was tentatively scheduled for March 11, the final day of Khatami's four-day visit. The Arabic newspaper Al Hayat reported on Friday that Khatami would invite the 78-year-old Polish-born Pope to Tehran during their meeting but sources could not confirm the report. The Vatican and Iran have always enjoyed full diplomatic ties, the sources said. Khatami, a Shiite cleric who is widely seen as a moderate reformer, will deliver a speech during his trip to the European University Institute in Florence which is expected to include a message to Europe. He is also expected to visit France.

Canadian diplomat robbed in S. Africa

CAPE TOWN (R) — Canada's top diplomat in South Africa was attacked by an unknown robber who tricked his way into the Pretoria-based envoy's hotel room in Cape Town, the Canadian High Commission said on Friday. The attacker, pretending to be a member of the luxury hotel's maintenance staff, drew a stun gun on High Commissioner James Bartleman, 60, tied him up and robbed him of his valuables, the commission said in a statement. Bartleman, who was in Cape Town to attend the opening of parliament by President Nelson Mandela on Friday, sustained a fractured nose and injured foot, but was released from hospital on Friday and travelled back to his home in Pretoria. He said the assault had helped him to understand the crime-plagued daily reality of life in South Africa.

Death row convict exonerated

CHICAGO (R) — A man who spent 16 years on death row and who came within two days of execution was ordered released from prison on Friday after another man confessed to the double murder of which he was convicted. Judge Thomas Fitzgerald of the Cook County Circuit Court ordered Anthony Porter, 42, released at the request of prosecutors while they investigate a videotaped confession Porter's backers said had exonerated him. Porter was in the courtroom and wept at the judge's decision. His lawyer said the confession and other evidence makes it "very clear that Mr. Porter did not commit this crime." Just two days ago a private investigator and a team of Northwestern University journalism students produced a confession from Alstori Simon, 48, of Milwaukee, who said he committed the double murder in 1982 in a drug deal gone sour.

Four Danish sailors die in accident

HAMBURG (AP) — High waves and winds of up to 160 kilometres an hour sank a Danish coastal ship in the North Sea on Friday, killing at least four seamen. The bodies were recovered and two others from the ship *Petit Folmer* were still being sought near the wreck west of Sylt island. One of the five-man crew was rescued by helicopter. Rescue boats were also searching for a seaman reported overboard by a fishing ship off the northern coastline, a rescue office statement said. The water level in Hamburg harbour was 5.7 metres above normal but was forecast to slowly recede over the weekend.

U.S. Navy, merchant ships collide

VIRGINIA BEACH (AP) — A U.S. Navy destroyer and a Saudi merchant ship collided early Friday in the Atlantic Ocean, about 40 kilometres off the eastern city of Virginia Beach. No one went overboard, and the only injury was a broken arm suffered by a sailor aboard the USS *Arthur W. Radford*. The 172-metre-long *Radford* was conducting routine operations when it and the 200-metre container ship *Saudi Riyadh* collided. The *Saudi Riyadh*, from Saudi Arabia, was heading to Baltimore. Bows on both ships were damaged, but damage assessments remained incomplete, said Lt. Cmdr. Bill Spann, spokesman for the Navy's Second Fleet. The Norfolk-based *Radford*, commissioned in 1977, was headed to the Norfolk Naval Base, where divers will inspect the hull for damage.

U.S. weighs sanctions against Russia over proposed arms sales to Syria

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States may withhold some \$50 million in aid to Russia if Moscow proceeds with weapons sales to Syria, the State Department said Friday.

The sanctions would be imposed under U.S. law that requires that certain assistance be withheld from any foreign government that supplies lethal military equipment to a country identified as a state sponsor of terrorism, such as Syria, a department official said.

"Approximately \$50 million of assistance to the

Russian Federation could be at stake under the relevant statutory provisions," the official said.

It was not immediately clear what type of assistance could be withheld.

The official said Washington's concerns about Moscow's proposed arms sales were raised by Russian leaders during Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's recent trip there.

Russia's first deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov has vehemently criticised the threat of U.S.

sanctions.

The ITAR-TASS news agency quoted him as saying that Moscow "would react accordingly to this sort of threat."

On Thursday, a Russian newspaper reported that a Syrian military delegation was in Moscow negotiating a five-year, two-billion-dollar arms deal.

Syria is seeking to modernise its army, 90 per cent of whose hardware is currently Russian or Soviet, requiring up to one million dollars a year in Russian spare parts.

Iran rules out international inquiry into dissidents' murders

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran rejected Friday calls by the European parliament and other organisations for an international inquiry into a recent wave of murders of dissident intellectuals here.

"The entry of any foreign mission for an inquiry into murders or any other judicial matter is prohibited," conservative judiciary chief Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi said.

"Iran is an independent country and does not accept any foreign interference... The judiciary rejects an inquiry team or fact-finding mission of any sort," he told worshippers

at Iran's main weekly Muslim prayers at Tehran University.

Yazdi insisted that the openness of the Iranian justice system meant that there was in any case no need for any inquiry.

"There is a genuine dialogue between the judiciary and the people and we have no problem," he said.

But the wave of murders has led to a blizzard of words within the Islamic regime since the shock announcement by Iran's intelligence ministry early last month that "rogue" agents had been involved in the killings.

Opponents of reformist President Mohammad Khatami insist that the murders are part of a foreign plot to weaken institutions within the regime still dominated by the conservatives.

But reformers close to Khatami say that the murders were the work of hardliners close to the conservatives and have demanded a thorough overhaul of Iran's intelligence services and the replacement of their conservative head, Intelligence Minister Hojatoleslam Ghorbanali Dorri-Najafabadi.

Cyprus says missiles on Crete will be operational

NICOSIA (R) — Russian anti-aircraft missiles originally destined for Cyprus but diverted to the Greek island of Crete will be fully operational rather than merely stored there, Cypriot officials said on Friday.

The missiles were re-routed amid Greek and Cypriot fears that their installation on Cyprus would increase tensions with Turkey and wreck the island's bid to join the European Union.

"The decision of Greece and Cyprus stands that these missiles will be installed in Crete and will be fully deployed," government spokesman Christos Stylianides said.

It was not immediately clear whether Greece or Cyprus would control the S-300 missiles.

Turkey fears long-term U.S. aims in Iraq

By Ralph Boulton Reuters

ANKARA — Turkey is increasingly anxious about U.S. air strikes against northern Iraq from its Incirlik base, fearing a creeping U.S. policy that could end in chaos in Baghdad or the nightmare of a Kurdish state on Turkish borders.

U.S. jets flying from the joint Turkish-U.S. base attacked seven Iraqi air defence sites in northern Iraq last weekend.

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, a critic of the Western-imposed Iraqi no-fly zones while in opposition, has yet to explicitly challenge U.S. insistence recent strikes were purely defensive. But a note of scepticism about U.S. policy has been clearly audible here since the veteran leftist-cum-nationalist took office last month.

A false alarm warning of an Iraqi missile attack on Turkish soil recently only added to the tension.

"Ankara is uneasy because you don't know when dealing with a great power like the United States how it will behave or if it will one day pre-

sent you with a fait accompli," Seyfi Tashan, head of the independent Foreign Policy Institute, said.

The fait accompli haunting Turkey above all would be division of Iraq and creation under Western sponsorship of a Kurdish state or protectorate above the 36th Parallel.

"This is certainly the fear that is in the back of Mr. Ecevit's mind," one government source said.

The area has been beyond Baghdad's control since the 1991 Gulf War and is patrolled by U.S. and British warplanes under Operation Northern Watch.

Washington has forged agreement between rival Iraqi Kurdish groups the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, who now control northern Iraq.

U.S. assurances this is not the first step to a Kurdish state have done little to calm fears here, especially among nationalists who are quick to revive memories of a Western plan in the 1920s to create a Kurdish state at Turkish expense.

The creation of such a state

could pose acute problems for a country which has been fighting Kurdish separatist guerrillas for the last 14 years, at a cost of 29,000 lives.

Inevitably, claims would be raised for inclusion of mainly Kurdish-populated areas of southeastern Turkey where Abdullah Ocalan's Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) has focused its campaign.

At the least it might encourage PKK action.

"This would have serious negative implications for the Turkish policy of a unitary state," Tashan said.

"This is a chapter that Turkey does not want to open."

Turkey, a strictly centralist state, insists the "fashion" of ethnic autonomy that has prevailed in some areas of Europe since the collapse of Soviet control has no place here.

The official view is that concessions to the PKK, viewed by Ankara as little more than butchers and drug traffickers, or to any other proponents of self-rule would prompt disintegration of the Turkish state and dismemberment by hostile neighbours.

The list of those, as seen from Ankara, is long.

Among them are Syria, which had harboured Ocalan until a campaign of Turkish military threats forced him to flee last autumn; Greece, seen by the armed forces as the chief threat and the focus of territorial disputes; and Russia which remains a close rival in the transcaucasian and Central Asian regions.

Critics say Turkey could ease its problems by accepting a decentralisation of power. It lacks, however, the strong government necessary for any such initiative.

Ankara, while not supporting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in any way, does not want to be seen abetting dismemberment of any Arab state. It also fears the chaos that might follow a U.S.-engineered coup in Iraq.

In an interview with the conservative newspaper *Turkiye* on Monday, President Suleyman Demirel recalled that half a million refugees had flooded into Turkey as a result of the 1991 Gulf War.

"Turkey does not want a rep-

etition of this," he said.

Government sources say Turkey, though heavily backed by the United States in its diplomacy, most recently in unsuccessful efforts to win Ocalan's extradition from Italy, feels its losses from international sanctions against Iraq imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait are given scant attention.

"The embargo is really affecting Turkey, not Iraq. Turkey's total losses are about \$30 billion," the source said.

Retired ambassador Sukru Elekdogan wrote in *Milliyet* newspaper that the longer Saddam remained in power, the greater the danger Iraq would be divided. "Thus it is increasingly important for Turkey that Saddam be eliminated."

"The United States is using planes deployed at Incirlik under Operation Northern Watch beyond their mandate," he wrote.

"Ecevit's government, although uneasy about this situation, does not stop the flights. It would be pointless to behave otherwise for Turkey, which so needs United States support."

Extradition proceedings against alleged...

Volume 24 Number 700

Crown sworn

King Hussein of Jordan was sworn in as the 14th monarch of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Friday. The ceremony took place in Amman, the capital, and was attended by members of the royal family and government officials. King Hussein, who has reigned since 1952, was sworn in by the Grand Mufti of Jordan, Sheikh Muhammad Ta'ah. The ceremony was a significant event in Jordan's history, marking the beginning of a new era for the kingdom. King Hussein is known for his commitment to peace and stability in the region, and his leadership has been instrumental in the development of Jordan as a modern, democratic state.

King received

King Hussein of Jordan received a delegation of officials from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Friday. The delegation, led by the Grand Mufti of Jordan, Sheikh Muhammad Ta'ah, was welcomed by King Hussein at the Royal Palace in Amman. The ceremony was a formal reception, and the King expressed his appreciation for the delegation's visit. The delegation's mission was to discuss various issues related to the kingdom's development and governance. King Hussein's reception of the delegation was a testament to his commitment to the well-being of his subjects and the stability of his kingdom.

Canadian diplomat robbed in S. Africa

CAPE TOWN (R) — Canada's top diplomat in South Africa was attacked by an unknown robber who tricked his way into the Pretoria-based envoy's hotel room in Cape Town, the Canadian High Commission said on Friday. The attacker, pretending to be a member of the luxury hotel's maintenance staff, drew a stun gun on High Commissioner James Bartleman, 60, tied him up and robbed him of his valuables, the commission said in a statement. Bartleman, who was in Cape Town to attend the opening of parliament by President Nelson Mandela on Friday, sustained a fractured nose and injured foot, but was released from hospital on Friday and travelled back to his home in Pretoria. He said the assault had helped him to understand the crime-plagued daily reality of life in South Africa.

Death row convict exonerated

CHICAGO (R) — A man who spent 16 years on death row and who came within two days of execution was ordered released from prison on Friday after another man confessed to the double murder of which he was convicted. Judge Thomas Fitzgerald of the Cook County Circuit Court ordered Anthony Porter, 42, released at the request of prosecutors while they investigate a videotaped confession Porter's backers said had exonerated him. Porter was in the courtroom and wept at the judge's decision. His lawyer said the confession and other evidence makes it "very clear that Mr. Porter did not commit this crime." Just two days ago a private investigator and a team of Northwestern University journalism students produced a confession from Alstori Simon, 48, of Milwaukee, who said he committed the double murder in 1982 in a drug deal gone sour.

Four Danish sailors die in accident

HAMBURG (AP) — High waves and winds of up to 160 kilometres an hour sank a Danish coastal ship in the North Sea on Friday, killing at least four seamen. The bodies were recovered and two others from the ship *Petit Folmer* were still being sought near the wreck west of Sylt island. One of the five-man crew was rescued by helicopter. Rescue boats were also searching for a seaman reported overboard by a fishing ship off the northern coastline, a rescue office statement said. The water level in Hamburg harbour was 5.7 metres above normal but was forecast to slowly recede over the weekend.

U.S. Navy, merchant ships collide

VIRGINIA BEACH (AP) — A U.S. Navy destroyer and a Saudi merchant ship collided early Friday in the Atlantic Ocean, about 40 kilometres off the eastern city of Virginia Beach. No one went overboard, and the only injury was a broken arm suffered by a sailor aboard the USS *Arthur W. Radford*. The 172-metre-long *Radford* was conducting routine operations when it and the 200-metre container ship *Saudi Riyadh* collided. The *Saudi Riyadh*, from Saudi Arabia, was heading to Baltimore. Bows on both ships were damaged, but damage assessments remained incomplete, said Lt. Cmdr. Bill Spann, spokesman for the Navy's Second Fleet. The Norfolk-based *Radford*, commissioned in 1977, was headed to the Norfolk Naval Base, where divers will inspect the hull for damage.